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# **ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM,**

**BY**

**HENRY HOME, LORD KAMES,**

**JUDGE OF THE COURT OF SESSIONS IN SCOTLAND, &c. &c.**

**WITH**

**A N A L Y S E S,**

**AND**

**TRANSLATIONS OF ANCIENT AND FOREIGN**

**ILLUSTRATIONS.**

---

**EDITED BY ABRAHAM MILLS, A. M.**

**AUTHOR OF AN IMPROVED EDITION OF ALISON ON THE LAW, &c.**

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# P R E F A C E

TO

## T H E   S E C O N D   E D I T I O N .

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PRINTING, by multiplying copies at will, affords to writers great opportunity of receiving instruction from every quarter. The author of this treatise, having always been of opinion that the general taste is seldom wrong, was resolved, from the beginning, to submit to it with entire resignation: its severest disapprobation might have incited him to do better, but never to complain. Finding now the judgment of the public to be favorable, ought he not to draw satisfaction from it? He would be devoid of sensibility were he not greatly satisfied. Many criticisms have indeed reached his ear; but they are candid and benevolent, if not always just. Gratitude, therefore, had there been no other motive, must have roused his utmost industry, to clear this edition from all the defects of the former, so far as suggested by others, or discovered by himself. In a work containing many particulars, both new and abstruse, it was difficult to express every article with sufficient perspicuity; and, after all the pains bestowed, there remained certain passages which are generally thought obscure. The author, giving an attentive ear to every censure of that kind, has, in the present edition, renewed his efforts to correct every defect; and he would gladly hope that he has not been altogether unsuccessful. The truth is, that a writer, who must be possessed of

the thought before he can put it into words, is but ill qualified to judge whether the expression be sufficiently clear others: in that particular, he cannot avoid the taking on him to judge for the reader, who can much better judge for himself

*June, 1763*



## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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THE present edition of Lord Kames' Criticisms was prepared, and is now offered to the public, with a view of facilitating the use of the work, and of rendering it more acceptable to general readers. To effect the former object, an analysis has been placed at the head of each chapter; and to effect the latter, translations, either original or selected, have been affixed to the numerous passages introduced as illustrations, from the Latin and Italian languages.

The editor deems it unnecessary to enter into any process of argument, by which to justify the course he has pursued in the preparation of the present work; as in all matters of practical utility, the only just judgment that can possibly be formed must necessarily rest on practical effects: and though he would be sorry to arrogate any superiority to himself, or to his own observation, yet there may, perhaps, be no impropriety in saying, that the result of the experience of many years arduously devoted to the business of instruction, is, a thorough conviction that only by presenting a subject to the mind in its leading features, and as one whole, can students obtain a clear and comprehensive view of it. Too much dependence however, in the use of the work, must not be placed upon the analyses; for it is by no means intended that because of them is less of the work to be learned.

their principal object is, as before stated, to render the instruction of classes less irksome, and less difficult. The editor would, therefore, recommend to professors and teachers, uniformly to insist that scholars, at the commencement of their recitations, be prepared to repeat, with perfect clearness, the subject of each chapter or section, by its respective analysis; and from it to conduct the recitation of the class. He is aware, however, that to teachers not familiar with the subject, this would be impossible; but where is the teacher to be found, determined to excel in his profession, who would not, from considerations, both of duty and of interest, study to acquire that familiarity by which alone, he can secure to himself, the confidence and respect of his scholars, and ultimate success in his calling!

That in works for general reading, and especially in text books, translations should be uniformly affixed to passages introduced from the ancient classics, as illustrations, the editor does not hesitate to say must be the conviction of every candid and intelligent mind: as to scholars who may be familiar with those languages, they can certainly be no hinderance; while to those who have not enjoyed the advantages of a classical education, they are indispensably necessary. It is true that many persons still seem to think it bordering almost on presumption for any one to pretend to taste or elegant scholarship in the Belles Lettres, who can not read Latin and Greek; but though the advantages of a knowledge of these languages, in forming one's taste, must ever be acknowledged to be immensely great, yet it by no means follows, that those who may not understand them have not it in their power to cultivate theirs. The principles of taste, and the perception of the Sublime and the Beautiful, exist, in a greater or less degree, in every mind; and as every man fami-

liar with the subject, must be sensible that English literature is enriched with its full share of the most exquisite productions, both in poetry and prose; so it would seem to follow, that if these be devotedly studied, their beauties will be properly ascertained, and duly appreciated.

Besides, it must not be forgotten, that the pursuits of elegant literature form the most important part of the course of instruction at the present time pursued in every well regulated female-school, both in this country and in Great Britain; and as cases very rarely occur, in which young ladies are to be found with sufficient acquaintance with the ancient classics to study works filled with illustrations taken from them, that their studies may not be constantly interrupted, every beauty should be presented in such a form that they may immediately perceive it.

It is by no means pretended, however, that the force and spirit of the original poetry, is uniformly retained in the translations. This, when the dissimilarity that exists between the two languages is borne in mind, will at once be perceived to be impossible; but as the greater part of the translations here introduced, are from translators of acknowledged celebrity, the editor feels confident that, though accuracy principally was aimed at in preparing them, yet they will be found sufficiently elegant not to mar, at least, the interest of the work.

With regard to the body of the work, the editor has been at great pains to preserve it in as pure a state, and as nearly as it originally came from the pen of the celebrated author, as possible. To effect this purpose, the present edition is printed, with the utmost accuracy, from a copy of an edition published in Edinburgh before the author's death, and which received his last revision.

Having thus briefly stated the character of the work, and the

improvements that are proposed to have been added to it, the editor leaves the public to decide how far his labors may be considered commendable; and should the objects mentioned in the commencement of these remarks, be found to have been attained, he will feel himself abundantly compensated.

*New-York, April, 1833.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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Nothing external perceived till it makes an impression on the organs of sense—A wide difference with respect to our knowledge of this impression—Sensible of the impression in touch, taste, and smell—In seeing and hearing not sensible of it—The pleasures of the eye and the ear occupy a middle rank—Other valuable properties of the pleasures of the eye and the ear besides those of elevation and dignity—Organic pleasures defective in three particulars—Intellectual pleasures fatigue, but are relieved by the pleasures of the eye and the ear—Taste in the fine arts nearly allied to moral sense—The design of the author—The requisites to form a critic—The effect of a thorough acquaintance with the fine arts—It affords an enticing sort of logic—It furnishes pleasing topics for conversation—It moderates the selfish affections, and invigorates the social—It contributes towards the support of morality—Authority formerly prevailed over reason; latterly reason has prevailed over authority, except in criticism—The productions of Homer and Virgil the foundation of Bossu's rules of criticism—Nature the only proper foundation—To censure works, not men, the proper object of criticism—Time the only true standard of taste.

THAT nothing external is perceived till it first makes an impression upon the organ of sense, is an observation that holds equally true in every one of the external senses. But there is a difference as to our knowledge of that impression. In touching, tasting, and smelling, we are sensible of the impression: that, for example, which is made upon the hand by a stone, upon the palate by an apricot, and upon the nostrils by a rose. It is otherwise in seeing and hearing; for I am not sensible of the impression made upon my eye, when I behold a tree; nor of the impression made upon my ear, when I listen to a song.\* That difference in the manner of perceiving external objects, distinguishes, remarkably, hearing and seeing from the other senses, and I am ready to show, that it distinguishes, still more remarkably, the feelings of the former from those of the latter. Every feeling pleasant or painful, must be in the mind; and yet, because in tasting, touching, and smelling, we are sensible of the impression made upon the organ, we are led to place there also the pleasant or painful feeling caused by that impression.† But, with respect to seeing and

\* See the Appendix, § 13.

† After the utmost efforts, we find it beyond our power to conceive the flavor of a rose to exist in the mind; we are necessarily led to conceive that pleasure as existing in the nostrils along with the impression made by the rose upon that organ. And the same will be the result of experiments with respect to every feeling of taste, touch, and smell. Touch affords the most satisfactory experiments. Were it not that the delusion is detected by philosophy, no person would hesitate to pronounce, that the pleasure arising from touching a smooth, soft, and velvet surface, has its existence at the ends of the fingers, without once dreaming of its existing any where else.



hearing, being insensible of the organic impression, we are not misled to assign a wrong place to the pleasant or painful feelings caused by that impression; and therefore we naturally place them in the mind, where they really are. Upon that account, they are conceived to be more refined and spiritual, than what are derived from tasting, touching, and smelling; for the latter feelings, seeming to exist externally at the organ of sense, are conceived to be merely corporeal.

The pleasures of the eye and the ear, being thus elevated above those of the other external senses, acquire so much dignity as to become a laudable entertainment. They are not, however, set on a level with the purely intellectual; being no less inferior in dignity to intellectual pleasures, than superior to the organic, or corporeal. They indeed resemble the latter, being, like them, produced by external objects; but they also resemble the former, being, like them, produced without any sensible organic impression. Their mixt nature, and middle place between organic and intellectual pleasures, qualify them to associate with both. Beauty heightens all the organic feelings, as well as the intellectual: harmony, though it aspires to inflame devotion, disdains not to improve the relish of a banquet.

The pleasures of the eye and the ear have other valuable properties beside those of dignity and elevation. Being sweet and moderately exhilarating, they are, in their tone, equally distant from the turbulence of passion, and the languor of indolence: and by that tone are perfectly well qualified, not only to revive the spirits when sunk by sensual gratification, but also to relax them when overstrained in any violent pursuit. Here is a remedy provided for many distresses; and, to be convinced of its salutary effects, it will be sufficient to run over the following particulars. Organic pleasures have naturally a short duration: when prolonged, they lose their relish; when indulged to excess, they beget satiety and disgust: and, to restore a proper tone of mind, nothing can be more happily contrived than the exhilarating pleasures of the eye and ear. On the other hand, any intense exercise of intellectual powers, becomes painful by overstraining the mind. Cessation from such exercise gives not instant relief: it is necessary that the void be filled with some amusement, gently relaxing the spirits.\* Organic pleasure, which has no relish but while we are in vigor, is ill qualified for that office; but the finer pleasures of sense, which occupy without exhausting the mind, are finely qualified to restore its usual tone after severe application to study or business, as well as after satiety from sensual gratification.

Our first perceptions are of external objects, and our first attachments are to them. Organic pleasures take the lead: but the mind, gradually ripening, relishes more and more the pleasures of the eye and ear; which approach the purely mental, without exhausting the

\* Du Bos judiciously observes, that silence does not tend to calm an agitated mind; but that soft and slow music has a fine effect.

spirits; and exceed the purely sensual, without danger of satiety. The pleasures of the eye and ear have, accordingly, a natural aptitude to draw us from the immoderate gratification of sensual appetite; and the mind, once accustomed to enjoy a variety of external objects without being sensible of the organic impression, is prepared for enjoying internal objects where there cannot be an organic impression. Thus the Author of nature, by qualifying the human mind for a succession of enjoyments from low to high, leads it, by gentle steps, from the most grovelling corporeal pleasures, for which only it is fitted in the beginning of life, to those refined and sublime pleasures that are suited to its maturity.

But we are not bound down to this succession by any law of necessity. The God of nature offers it to us, in order to advance our happiness; and it is sufficient, that he has enabled us to carry it on in a natural course. Nor has he made our task either disagreeable or difficult: on the contrary, the transition is sweet and easy, from corporeal pleasures to the more refined pleasures of sense, and no less so, from these, to the exalted pleasures of morality and religion. We stand, therefore, engaged in honor, as well as interest, to second the purposes of nature, by cultivating the pleasures of the eye and ear; those, especially, that require extraordinary culture\*—such as arise from poetry, painting, sculpture, music, gardening, and architecture. This, especially, is the duty of the opulent, who have leisure to improve their minds and their feelings. The fine arts are contrived to give pleasure to the eye and the ear, disregarding the inferior senses. A taste for these arts is a plant that grows naturally in many soils; but, without culture, scarcely to perfection in any soil. It is susceptible of much refinement; and is, by proper care, greatly improved. In this respect, a taste in the fine arts goes hand in hand with the moral sense, to which indeed it is nearly allied. Both of them discover what is right and what is wrong: fashion, temper, and education, have an influence to vitiate both, or to preserve them pure and untainted: neither of them are arbitrary nor local; being rooted in human nature, and governed by principles common to all men. The design of the present undertaking, which aspires not to morality, is, to examine the sensitive branch of human nature, to trace the objects that are naturally agreeable, as well as those that are naturally disagreeable; and by these means to discover, if we can, what are the genuine principles of the fine arts. The man who aspires to be a critic in these arts must pierce still deeper. He must acquire a clear perception of what objects are lofty, what low, what proper or improper, what manly, and what mean or trivial. Hence a foundation for reasoning upon the taste

\* A taste for natural objects is born with us in perfection; for relishing a fine countenance, a rich landscape, or a vivid colour, culture is unnecessary. The observation holds equally in natural sounds; such as the singing of birds, or the murmuring of a brook. Nature here, the artificer of the object as well as of the percipient, has accurately suited them to each other. But of a poem, a cantata, a picture, or other artificial production, a true relish is not commonly attained, without some study and much practice.

of any individual, and for passing sentence upon it. Where it is conformable to principles, we can pronounce with certainty that it is correct; otherwise, that it is incorrect, and perhaps whimsical. Thus the fine arts, like morals, become a rational science; and, like morals, may be cultivated to a high degree of refinement.

Manifold are the advantages of criticism, when thus studied as a rational science. In the first place, a thorough acquaintance with the principles of the fine arts, redoubles the pleasure we derive from them. To the man who resigns himself to feeling without interposing any judgment, poetry, music, painting, are mere pastime. In the prime of life, indeed, they are delightful, being supported by the force of novelty, and the heat of imagination: but in time they lose their relish; and are generally neglected in the maturity of life, which disposes to more serious and more important occupations. To those who deal in criticism as a regular science, governed by just principles, and giving scope to judgment as well as to fancy, the fine arts are a favorite entertainment; and in old age maintain that relish which they produce in the morning of life.\*

In the next place, a philosophic inquiry into the principles of the fine arts, inures the reflecting mind to the most enticing sort of logic. The practice of reasoning upon subjects so agreeable, tends to a habit; and a habit, strengthening the reasoning faculties, prepares the mind for entering into subjects more intricate and abstract. To have, in that respect, a just conception of the importance of criticism, we need but reflect upon the ordinary method of education; which, after some years spent in acquiring languages, hurries us, without the least preparatory discipline, into the most profound philosophy. A more effectual method to alienate the tender mind from abstract science, is beyond the reach of invention; and accordingly, with respect to such speculations, our youth generally contract a sort of hobgoblin terror, seldom if ever subdued. Those who apply to the arts, are trained in a very different manner. They are led, step by step, from the easier parts of the operation, to what are more difficult; and are not permitted to make a new motion, till they are perfected in those which go before. Thus the science of criticism may be considered as a middle link, connecting the different parts of education into a regular chain. This science furnishes an inviting opportunity to exercise the judgment. We delight to reason upon subjects that are equally pleasant and familiar: we proceed gradually from the simpler to the more involved cases; and in a due course of discipline, custom, which improves all our faculties, bestows acuteness on that of reason, sufficient to unravel all the intricacies of philosophy.

Nor ought it to be overlooked, that the reasonings employed on the fine arts are of the same kind with those which regulate our conduct. Mathematical and metaphysical reasonings have no tendency to improve our knowledge of man; nor are they applicable to the common affairs of life: but a just taste of the fine arts, derived from

\* "Though logic may subsist without rhetoric or poetry, yet so necessary to these last is a sound and correct logic, that without it they are no better than warbling trifles." *Hermes*, p. 6.

rational principles, furnishes elegant subjects for conversation, and prepares us for acting in the social state with dignity and propriety.

The science of rational criticism tends to improve the heart no less than the understanding. It tends, in the first place, to moderate the selfish affections. By sweetening and harmonizing the temper, it is a strong antidote to the turbulence of passion, and violence of pursuit. It procures, to a man, so much mental enjoyment, that, in order to be occupied, he is not tempted to deliver up his youth to hunting, gaming, drinking; nor his middle age to ambition; nor his old age to avarice. Pride and envy, two disgusting passions, find in the constitution no enemy more formidable than a delicate and discerning taste. The man upon whom nature and culture have bestowed this blessing, delights in the virtuous dispositions and actions of others: he loves to cherish them, and to publish them to the world. Faults and failings, it is true, are to him no less obvious; but these he avoids, or removes out of sight, because they give him pain. On the other hand, a man void of taste, upon whom even striking beauties make but a faint impression, indulges pride or envy without control, and loves to brood over errors and blemishes. In a word, there are other passions, that, upon occasion, may disturb the peace of society more than those mentioned; but not another passion is so unwearied an antagonist to the sweets of social intercourse. Pride and envy put a man perpetually in opposition to others; and dispose him to relish bad more than good qualities, even in a companion. How different that disposition of mind, where every virtue in a companion or neighbor is, by refinement of taste, set in its strongest light; and defects or blemishes, natural to all, are suppressed, or kept out of view!

In the next place, delicacy of taste tends no less to invigorate the social affections, than to moderate those that are selfish. To be convinced of that tendency, we need only reflect, that delicacy of taste necessarily heightens our feeling of pain and pleasure; and of course our sympathy, which is the capital branch of every social passion. Sympathy invites a communication of joys and sorrows, hopes and fears: such exercise, soothing and satisfactory in itself, is necessarily productive of mutual good-will and affection.

One other advantage of rational criticism is reserved to the last place, being of all the most important; which is, that it is a great support to morality. I insist on it with entire satisfaction, that no occupation attaches a man more to his duty, than that of cultivating a taste in the fine arts: a just relish of what is beautiful, proper, elegant, and ornamental, in writing or painting, in architecture or gardening, is a fine preparation for the same just relish of these qualities in character and behavior. To the man who has acquired a taste so acute and accomplished, every action, wrong or improper, must be highly disgusting. If, in any instance, the overbearing power of passion sway him from his duty, he returns to it with redoubled resolution never to be swayed a second time. He has now an additional motive to virtue, a conviction derived from experience, that happiness depends on regularity and order, and that disregard to

justice or propriety never fails to be punished with shame and remorse.\*

Rude ages exhibit the triumph of authority over reason. Philosophers anciently were divided into sects, being Epicureans, Platonists, Stoics, Pythagoreans, or Sceptics. The speculative relied no farther on their own judgment than to choose a leader, whom they implicitly followed. In later times, happily, reason has obtained the ascendant: men now assert their native privilege of thinking for themselves; and disdain to be ranked in any sect, whatever be the science. I am forced to except criticism, which, by what fatality I know not, continues to be no less slavish in its principles, nor less submissive to authority, than it was originally. Bossu, a celebrated French critic, gives many rules; but can discover no better foundation for any of them, than the practice merely of Homer and Virgil, supported by the authority of Aristotle. Strange! that in so long a work, he should never once have stumbled upon the question, whether, and how far, do these rules agree with human nature. It could not surely be his opinion, that these poets, however eminent for genius, were entitled to give law to mankind; and that nothing now remains, but blind obedience to their arbitrary will. If in writing they followed no rule, why should they be imitated? If they studied nature, and were obsequious to rational principles, why should these be concealed from us?

With respect to the present undertaking, it is not the author's intention to compose a regular treatise upon each of the fine arts; but only, in general, to exhibit their fundamental principles, drawn from human nature, the true source of criticism. The fine arts are intended to entertain us, by making pleasant impressions; and, by that circumstance, are distinguished from the useful arts. But, in order to make pleasant impressions, we ought, as above hinted, to know what objects are naturally agreeable, and what naturally disagreeable. That subject is here attempted, as far as necessary for unfolding the genuine principles of the fine arts; and the author assumes no merit from his performance, but that of evincing, perhaps more distinctly than has hitherto been done, that these principles, as well as every just rule of criticism, are founded upon the sensitive part of our nature. What the author has discovered or collected upon that subject, he chooses to impart in the gay and agreeable form of criticism; imagining that this form will be more relished, and perhaps be no less instructive, than a regular and labored disquisition. His plan is, to ascend gradually to principles, from facts and experiments; instead of beginning with the former, handled abstractedly, and descending to the latter. But, though criticism is thus his only declared aim, he will not disown, that all

\* Genius is allied to a warm and inflammable constitution, delicacy of taste to calmness and sedateness. Hence it is common to find genius in one who is a prey to every passion; but seldom delicacy of taste. Upon a man possessed of that blessing, the moral duties, no less than the fine arts, make a deep impression, and counterbalance every irregular desire: at the same time, a temper calm and sedate is not easily moved, even by a strong temptation.

along it has been his view, to explain the nature of Man, considered as a sensitive being capable of pleasure and pain: and, though he flatters himself with having made some progress in that important science, he is, however, too sensible of its extent and difficulty, to undertake it professedly, or to avow it as the chief purpose of the present work.

To censure works, not men, is the just prerogative of criticism; and, accordingly, all personal censure is here avoided, unless where necessary to illustrate some general proposition. No praise is claimed on that account; because censuring with a view merely to find fault, cannot be entertaining to any person of humanity. Writers, one should imagine, ought, above all others, to be reserved on that article, when they lie so open to retaliation. The author of this treatise, far from being confident of deserving no censure, entertains not even the slightest hope of such perfection. Amusement was at first the sole aim of his inquiries. Proceeding from one particular to another, the subject grew under his hand; and he was far advanced before the thought struck him, that his private meditations might be publicly useful. In public, however, he would not appear in a slovenly dress; and, therefore, he pretends not otherwise to apologise for his errors, than by observing, that in a new subject, no less nice than extensive, errors are, in some measure, unavoidable. Neither pretends he to justify his taste in every particular. That point must be extremely clear, which admits not variety of opinion; and in some matters susceptible of great refinement, time is perhaps the only infallible touchstone of taste. To that he appeals, and to that he cheerfully submits.

N. B. THE ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM, meaning the whole, is a title too assuming for this work. A number of these elements or principles are here unfolded: but, as the author is far from imagining that he has completed the list, a more humble title is proper, such as may express any number of parts less than the whole. This he thinks is signified by the title he has chosen, viz. ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM.





# ELEMENTS OF CRITICISM.

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## CHAPTER I.

A continued train of perceptions and ideas passing through the mind—The influence of the relation of objects in directing the train of thought—Connected ideas varied by different causes—The will accelerates our ideas by dismissing, retards by dwelling upon, and raises by attending to their slighter connections—A melancholy tone of mind produces melancholy ideas; a cheerful tone produces cheerful ideas—Bluntness of the perceptive faculty prevents from distinguishing relations—A great flow of ideas the consequence—Accurate judgment seldom connected with a great flow of ideas—Wit and judgment seldom connected—Order as well as connection observable in the succession of our ideas—The order of nature—The train of historical events, from cause to effect—The scientific train, from effect to cause—The former the synthetic, the latter the analytic method of reasoning—Order a restraint upon great geniuses—Homer, Pindar, Virgil, and others, deficient in order and connection—An episode should be interesting—It should relate to the subject—It should be short—It should be introduced where the subject relents.

A MAN, while awake, is conscious of a continued train of perceptions and ideas passing in his mind. It requires no activity on his part to carry on the train; nor can he at will add any idea to the train.\* At the same time, we learn from daily experience, that the train of our thoughts is not regulated by chance: and if it depend not upon will, nor upon chance, by what law is it governed? The question is of importance in the science of human nature; and I promise beforehand, that it will be found of great importance in the fine arts.

It appears, that the relations by which things are linked together, have a great influence in directing the train of thought. Taking a view of external objects, their inherent properties are not more remarkable, than the various relations that connect them together: cause and effect, contiguity in time or in place, high and low, prior and posterior, resemblance, contrast, and a thousand other relations, connect things together without end. Not a single thing appears solitary and altogether devoid of connection: the only difference is,

\* For how should this be done? what idea is it that we are to add? If we can specify the idea, that idea is already in the mind, and there is no occasion for any act of the will. If we cannot specify any idea, I next demand, how can a person will, or to what purpose, if there be nothing in view? We cannot form a conception of such a thing. If this argument need confirmation, I urge experience: whoever makes a trial will find, that ideas are linked together in the mind, forming a connected chain; and that we have not the command of any idea independent of the chain.

hat some are intimately connected, some more slightly ; some near, some at a distance.

Experience will satisfy us of what reason makes probable, that the train of our thoughts is, in a great measure, regulated by the foregoing relations. An external object is no sooner presented to us in idea, than it suggests, to the mind, other objects to which it is related ; and in that manner is a train of thoughts composed. Such is the law of succession ; which must be natural, because it governs all human beings. The law, however, seems not to be inviolable. It sometimes happens that an idea arises in the mind, without any perceived connection : as, for example, after a profound sleep.

But, though we cannot add to the train an unconnected idea, yet, in a measure, we can attend to some ideas, and dismiss others. There are few things but what are connected with many others ; and when a thing thus connected becomes a subject of thought, it commonly suggests many of its connections. Among these a choice is afforded : we can insist upon one, rejecting others ; and sometimes we insist on what is commonly held the slighter connection. Where ideas are left to their natural course, they are continued through the strictest connections : the mind extends its view to a son more readily than to a servant ; and more readily to a neighbor than to one living at a distance. This order, as observed, may be varied by will, but still within the limits of related objects ; for though we can vary the order of a natural train, we cannot dissolve the train altogether, by carrying on our thoughts in a loose manner without any connection. So far does our power extend ; and that power is sufficient for all useful purposes : to have more power, would probably be hurtful, instead of being salutary.

*Will* is not the only cause that prevents a train of thought from being continued through the strictest connections : much depends on the present tone of mind ; for a subject that accords with that tone is always welcome. Thus, in good spirits, a cheerful subject will be introduced by the slightest connection ; and one that is melancholy, no less readily in low spirits. An interesting subject is recalled, from time to time, by any connection indifferently, strong or weak ; which is finely touched by Shakspeare, with relation to a rich cargo at sea :

My wind, cooling my broth,  
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
What harm a wind too great might do at sea  
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,  
But I should think of shallows and of flats ;  
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,  
Vailing her high top lower than her ribs,  
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me strait of dangerous rocks ?  
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
Would scatter all the spices on the stream,  
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks ;  
And, in a word, but now worth this,  
And now worth nothing.

*Merchant of Venice, Act I. Sc. I*

Another cause clearly distinguishable from that now mentioned, has also a considerable influence to vary the natural train of ideas; which is, that, in the minds of some persons, thoughts and circumstances crowd upon each other by the slightest connections. I ascribe this to a bluntness in the discerning faculty; for a person who cannot accurately distinguish between a slight connection and one that is more intimate, is equally affected by each. Such a person must necessarily have a great flow of ideas, because they are introduced by any relation indifferently; and the slighter relations, being without number, furnish ideas without end. This doctrine is, in a lively manner, illustrated by Shakspeare.

*Falstaff.* What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

*Hostess.* Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and thy money too. Thou didst swear to me on a parcel gilt-goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the Prince broke thy head for likening him to a singing man of Windsor; thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my Lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not Goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me Gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound. And didst not thou, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people, saying, that ere long they should call me Madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath, deny it if thou canst?

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act II. Sc. 2.*

On the other hand, a man of accurate judgment cannot have a great flow of ideas, because the slighter relations, making no figure in his mind, have no power to introduce ideas. And hence it is that accurate judgment is not friendly to declamation or copious eloquence. This reasoning is confirmed by experience; for it is a noted observation, that a great or comprehensive memory is seldom connected with a good judgment.

As an additional confirmation, I appeal to another noted observation, that wit and judgment are seldom united. Wit consists chiefly in joining things by distant and fanciful relations, which surprise because they are unexpected: such relations, being of the slightest kind, readily occur to those only who make every relation equally welcome. Wit, upon that account, is, in a good measure, incompatible with solid judgment; which, neglecting trivial relations, adheres to what are substantial and permanent. Thus memory and wit are often conjoined: solid judgment seldom with either.

Every man who attends to his own ideas, will discover order as well as connection in their succession. There is implanted in the breast of every man a principle of order, which governs the arrangement of his perceptions, of his ideas, and of his actions. With regard to perceptions, I observe that, in things of equal rank, such as sheep in a fold, or trees in a wood, it must be indifferent in what order they be surveyed. But, in things of unequal rank, our tendency is, to view the principal subject before we descend to its accessories or ornaments, and the superior before the inferior or dependant: we are equally averse to enter into a minute consideration

of constituent parts, till the thing be first surveyed as a whole. It need scarcely be added, that our ideas are governed by the same principle; and that, in thinking or reflecting upon a number of objects, we naturally follow the same order as when we actually survey them.

The principle of order is conspicuous with respect to natural operations; for it always directs our ideas in the order of nature. Thinking upon a body in motion, we follow its natural course: the mind falls with a heavy body, descends with a river, and ascends with flame and smoke. In tracing out a family, we incline to begin at the founder, and to descend gradually to his latest posterity: on the contrary, musing on a lofty oak, we begin at the trunk, and mount from it to the branches. As to historical facts, we love to proceed in the order of time; or, which is the same thing, to proceed along the chain of causes and effects.

But though, in following out an historical chain, our bent is to proceed orderly from causes to their effects, we find not the same bent in matters of science. There we seem rather disposed to proceed from effects to their causes, and from particular propositions to those which are more general. Why this difference in matters that appear so nearly related? I answer, that the cases are similar in appearance only, not in reality. In an historical chain, every event is particular, the effect of some former event, and the cause of others that follow: in such a chain, there is nothing to bias the mind from the order of nature. Widely different is science, when we endeavor to trace out causes and their effects. Many experiments are commonly reduced under one cause; and again, many of these causes under one still more general and comprehensive. In our progress from particular effects to general causes, and from particular propositions to the more comprehensive, we feel a gradual dilatation or expansion of mind, like what is felt in an ascending series, which is extremely pleasing. The pleasure here exceeds that which arises from following the course of nature; and it is that pleasure which regulates our train of thought in the case now mentioned, and in others that are similar. These observations, by the way, furnish materials for instituting a comparison between the synthetic and analytic methods of reasoning. The synthetic method, descending regularly from principles to their consequences, is more agreeable to the strictness of order; but in following the opposite course in the analytic method, we have a sensible pleasure, like mounting upward, which is not felt in the other. The analytic method is more agreeable to the imagination; the other method will be preferred by those only, who, with rigidity, adhere to order, and give no indulgence to natural emotions.\*

It now appears that we are framed by nature to relish order and connection. When an object is introduced by a proper connection, we are conscious of a certain pleasure arising from that circumstance. Among objects of equal rank, the pleasure is proportioned

\* A train of perceptions or ideas, with respect to its uniformity and variety, is handled afterwards, chap. 9.

to the degree of connection ; but among unequal objects, where we require a certain order, the pleasure arises chiefly from an orderly arrangement ; of which one is sensible, in tracing objects contrary to the course of nature, or contrary to our sense of order. The mind proceeds with alacrity down a flowing river, and with the same alacrity from a whole to its parts, or from a principal to its accessories ; but in the contrary direction, it is sensible of a sort of retrograde motion, which is unpleasant. And here may be remarked the great influence of order upon the mind of man. Grandeur which makes a deep impression, inclines us, in running over any series, to proceed from small to great, rather than from great to small ; but order prevails over that tendency, and affords pleasure as well as facility in passing from a whole to its parts, and from a subject to its ornaments, which are not felt in the opposite course. Elevation touches the mind no less than grandeur ; and in raising the mind to elevated objects, there is a sensible pleasure. The course of nature, however, has still a greater influence than elevation : and therefore, the pleasure of falling with rain, and descending gradually with a river, prevails over that of mounting upward. But where the course of nature is joined with elevation, the effect must be delightful ; and hence the singular beauty of smoke ascending in a calm morning.

I am extremely sensible of the disgust men generally have to abstract speculation ; and I would avoid it altogether, if it could be done in a work that professes to draw the rules of criticism from human nature, their true source. We have but a single choice, which is, to continue a little longer in the same train, or to abandon the undertaking altogether. Candor obliges me to intimate this to my readers, that such of them as have an invincible aversion to abstract speculation, may stop short here ; for till principles be unfolded, I can promise no entertainment to those who shun thinking. But I flatter myself with a different bent in the generality of readers : some few, I imagine, will relish the abstract part for its own sake ; and many for the useful purposes to which it may be applied. For encouraging the latter to proceed with alacrity, I assure them beforehand, that the foregoing speculation leads to many important rules of criticism, which shall be unfolded in the course of this work. In the meantime, for instant satisfaction in part, they will be pleased to accept the following specimen.

Every work of art that is conformable to the natural course of our ideas, is so far agreeable ; and every work of art that reverses that course, is so far disagreeable. Hence it is required in every such work, that, like an organic system, its parts be orderly arranged and mutually connected, bearing each of them a relation to the whole, some more intimate, some less, according to their destination. When due regard is had to these particulars, we have a sense of just composition, and so far are pleased with the performance. Homer is defective in order and connection ; and Pindar is more remarkably so. Regularity, order, and connection, are painful restraints on a bold and fertile imagination ; and are patiently submitted to, only

after much culture and discipline. In Horace there is no fault more eminent than want of connection: instances are without number. In the first fourteen lines of ode 7. lib. i. he mentions several towns and districts, more to the taste of some than of others: in the remainder of the ode, Plancus is exhorted to drown his cares in wine. Having narrowly escaped death by the fall of a tree, this poet\* takes occasion to observe justly, that while we guard against some dangers, we are exposed to others we cannot foresee: he ends with displaying the power of music. The parts of ode 16. lib. 2. are so loosely connected as to disfigure a poem otherwise extremely beautiful. The 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 11th, 24th, 27th odes of the 3d book, all lie open to the same censure. The first satire, book I. is so deformed by want of connection, as upon the whole to be scarcely agreeable. It commences with the important question, how it happens that people, though much satisfied with themselves, are seldom so with their rank or condition. After illustrating the observation in a sprightly manner by several examples, the author, forgetting his subject, enters upon a declamation against avarice, which he pursues till the 108th line. There he makes an apology for wandering, and promises to return to his subject; but avarice having got possession of his mind, he follows out that theme to the end, and never returns to the question proposed in the beginning.

Of Virgil's Georgics, though esteemed the most complete work of that author, the parts are ill connected, and the transitions far from being sweet and easy. In the first book† he deviates from his subject to give a description of the five zones. The want of connection here, as well as in the description of the prodigies that accompanied the death of Cæsar, are scarcely pardonable. A digression on the praises of Italy in the second book,‡ is not more happily introduced: and in the midst of a declamation upon the pleasures of husbandry, which makes part of the same book,§ the author introduces himself into the poem without the slightest connection. In the Lutrín, the Goddess of Discord is introduced without any connection. She is of no consequence in the poem; and acts no part except that of lavishing praise upon Louis XIV. The two prefaces of Sallust look as if by some blunder they had been prefixed to his two histories: they will suit any other history as well, or any subject as well as history. Even the members of these prefaces are but loosely connected: they look more like a number of maxims or observations than a connected discourse.

An episode, in a narrative poem, being in effect an accessory, demands not that strict union with the principal subject, which is requisite between a whole and its constituent parts: it demands, however, a degree of union, such as ought to subsist between a principal and accessory; and therefore will not be graceful if it be loosely connected with the principal subject. I give, for an example, the descent of Æneas into hell, which employs the sixth book of the *Æneid*. The reader is not prepared for that important event: no cause is assigned that can make it appear necessary, or even natural, to sus-

\* Lib. ii. ode 13.

† L. n. 231.

‡ Lin. 134

§ Lin. 475.

pend, for so long a time, the principal action in its most interesting period: the poet can find no pretext for an adventure so extraordinary, but the hero's longing to visit the ghost of his father, recently dead: in the mean time the story is interrupted, and the reader loses his ardor. Pity it is that an episode so extremely beautiful, were not more happily introduced. I must observe, at the same time, that full justice is done to this incident, by considering it to be an episode; for if it be a constituent part of the principal action, the connection ought to be still more intimate. The same objection lies against that elaborate description of Fame in the *Æneid*:\* any other book of that heroic poem, or of any heroic poem, has as good a title to that description as the book where it is placed.

In a natural landscape, we every day perceive a multitude of objects connected by contiguity solely; which is not unpleasant, because objects of sight make an impression so lively, that a relation even of the slightest kind is relished. This, however, ought not to be imitated in description. Words are so far short of the eye in liveliness of impression, that in a description connection ought to be carefully studied; for new objects introduced in description are made more or less welcome in proportion to the degree of their connection with the principal subject. In the following passage, different things are brought together without the slightest connection, if it be not what may be called verbal, i. e. taking the same word in different meanings.

*Surgamus: solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra.  
Juniperi gravis umbra: nocent et frugibus umbræ.  
Ite domum saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ.  
Virg. Buc. x. 75.*

Now let us rise, for hoarseness oft invades  
The singer's voice, who sings beneath the shades;  
From juniper unwholesome dews distil  
That blast the sooty corn, the withering herbage kill—  
Away, my goats, away, for you have browsed your fill.

The introduction of an object metaphorically or figuratively, will not justify the introduction of it in its natural appearance: a relation so slight can never be relished:

Distrust in lovers is too warm a sun;  
But yet 'tis night in love when that is gone.  
And in those climes which most his scorching know,  
He makes the noblest fruits and metals grow.

*Part 2. Conquest of Granada, Act III.*

The relations among objects have a considerable influence in the gratification of our passions, and even in their production. But that subject is reserved to be treated in the chapter of emotions and passions.†

There is not, perhaps, another instance of a building so great, erected upon a foundation so slight in appearance, as the relations of objects and their arrangement. Relations make no capital figure in the mind, the bulk of them being transitory, and some extremely trivial. They are, however, the links that, by uniting our perceptions into one connected chain, produce connection of action, because

\* Lib. iv. lin. 173.

† Chap. 2. part I. sect. 4.



perception and action have an intimate correspondence. But it is not sufficient for the conduct of life, that our actions be linked together, however intimately: it is beside necessary that they proceed in a certain order; and this also is provided for by an original propensity. Thus order and connection, while they admit sufficient variety, introduce a method in the management of affairs: without them our conduct would be fluctuating and desultory; and we should be hurried from thought to thought, and from action to action, entirely at the mercy of chance

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## CHAPTER II.

### EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.

The feelings excited by the eye and ear only, called emotions or passions—The connection between the fine arts and emotions and passions, the design of this chapter—The principles of the fine arts open a direct avenue to the heart—A general or slight survey all that can be expected.

Of all the feelings raised in us by external objects, those only of the eye and the ear are honored with the name of *passion* or *emotion*: the most pleasing feelings of taste, or touch, or smell, aspire not to that honor. From this observation appears the connection of emotions and passions with the fine arts, which, as observed in the introduction, are all calculated to give pleasure to the eye or the ear; never once descending to gratify any of the inferior senses. The design, accordingly, of this chapter, is to delineate that connection, with the view chiefly to ascertain what power the fine arts have to raise emotions and passions. To those who would excel in the fine arts, that branch of knowledge is indispensable; for without it the critic, as well as the undertaker, ignorant of any rule, has nothing left but to abandon himself to chance. Destitute of that branch of knowledge, in vain will either pretend to foretell what effect his work will have upon the heart.

The principles of the fine arts, appear, in this view, to open a direct avenue to the heart of man. The inquisitive mind beginning with criticism, the most agreeable of all amusements, and finding no obstruction in its progress, advances far into the sensitive part of our nature; and gains imperceptibly a thorough knowledge of the human heart, of its desires, and of every motive to action—a science, which of all that can be reached by man, is to him of the greatest importance.

Upon a subject so comprehensive, all that can be expected in this chapter, is a general or slight survey; and to shorten that survey, I propose to handle separately some emotions more peculiarly connected with the fine arts. Even after that circumscription, so much matter comes under the present chapter, that, to avoid confusion, I find it necessary to divide it into many parts: and though the first of these is confined to such causes of emotion or passion as are the most common and the most general, yet upon examination I find this

single part so extensive, as to require a subdivision into several sections. Human nature is a complicated machine, and is unavoidably so, in order to answer its various purposes. The public indeed have been entertained with many systems of human nature that flatter the mind by their simplicity. According to some writers, man is entirely a selfish being: according to others, universal benevolence is his duty: one founds morality upon sympathy solely, and one upon utility. If any of these systems were copied from nature, the present subject might be soon discussed. But the variety of nature is not so easily reached, and for confuting such Utopian systems without the fatigue of reasoning, it appears the best method to take a survey of human nature, and to set before the eye, plainly and candidly, facts as they really exist.

## PART I.

### CAUSES UNFOLDED OF THE EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.

#### SECTION I.

No passion or emotion exists without an antecedent cause—We love what is agreeable, and hate what is disagreeable—Sources of emotions—External qualities of objects—Internal qualities of objects—Actions of sensible beings; with, or without reflection—The intention of actions, not the event, to be considered—The feelings of others—Recollected ideas—Desire follows some emotions and not others—Passions always accompanied with desire; emotions, not—Passion is productive of action: we do nothing without an antecedent cause—The objects of our passions are general, and particular—Passions directed to general objects, called appetites; and those retain their name—An appetite precedes the object; a passion follows it—Actions are instinctive and deliberative—Passions and actions are social, selfish, mixed, or dissocial—Slight impediments increase desire; insurmountable ones overcome it—Different objects equally attainable, produce different degrees of emotion—Rational beings raise the strongest emotions; animate next; and inanimate the weakest.

THESE branches are so interwoven that they cannot be handled separately. It is a fact universally admitted, that no emotion or passion ever starts up in the mind without a cause. If I love a person, it is for good qualities or good offices: if I have resentment against a man, it must be for some injury he has done me: and I cannot pity any one who is under no distress of body nor of mind.

The circumstances now mentioned, if they raise an emotion or passion, cannot be entirely indifferent; for if so, they could not make any impression. And we find upon examination, that they are not indifferent. Looking back upon the foregoing examples, the good qualities or good offices that attract my love, are antecedently agreeable: if an injury did not give uneasiness, it would not occasion resentment against the author; nor would the passion of pity be raised by an object in distress, if that object did not give pain.

What is now said about the production of emotion or passion, resolves itself into a very simple proposition—that we love what is agreeable, and hate what is disagreeable. And indeed it is evident,

that a thing must be agreeable or disagreeable, before it can be the object either of love or of hatred.

This short hint about the causes of passion and emotion, leads to a more extensive view of the subject. Such is our nature, that upon perceiving certain external objects, we are instantaneously conscious of pleasure or pain: a gently-flowing river—a smooth extended plain—a spreading oak—a towering hill, are objects of sight that raise pleasant emotions: a barren heath—a dirty marsh—a rotten carcass, raise painful emotions. Of the emotions thus produced, we inquire for no other cause than merely the presence of the object.

The things now mentioned, raise emotions by means of their properties and qualities. To the emotion raised by a large river, its size, its force, and its fluency, contributes each a share: the regularity, propriety, and convenience, of a fine building, contribute each to the emotion raised by the building.

If external properties be agreeable, we have reason to expect the same from those which are internal; and, accordingly, power, discernment, wit, mildness, sympathy, courage, benevolence, are agreeable in a high degree. Upon perceiving these qualities in others, we instantaneously feel pleasant emotions, without the slightest act of reflection, or of attention to consequences. It is almost unnecessary to add, that certain qualities opposite to the former, such as dullness, peevishness, inhumanity, cowardice, occasion, in the same manner, painful emotions.

Sensible beings affect us remarkably by their actions. Some actions raise pleasant emotions in the spectator, without the least reflection; such as graceful motion, and genteel behavior. But as *intention*, a capital circumstance in human actions, is not visible, it requires reflection to discover their true character. I see one delivering a purse of money to another, but I can make nothing of that action, till I learn with what intention the money is given. If it be given to discharge a debt, the action pleases me in a slight degree; if it be a grateful return, I feel a stronger emotion; and the pleasant emotion rises to a great height, when it is the intention of the giver to relieve a virtuous family from want. Thus actions are qualified by intention: but they are not qualified by the event; for an action well intended gives pleasure, whatever the event may be. Farther, human actions are perceived to be *right* or *wrong*; and that perception qualifies the pleasure or pain that results from them.\*

\* In tracing our emotions and passions to their origin, my first thought was, that qualities and actions are the primary causes of emotions; and that these emotions are afterwards expanded upon the being to which these qualities and actions belong. But I am now convinced that this opinion is erroneous. An attribute is not, even in imagination, separable from the being to which it belongs; and, for that reason, cannot, of itself, be the cause of any emotion. We have, it is true, no knowledge of any being or substance but by means of its attributes; and therefore no being can be agreeable to us otherwise than by their means. But still, when an emotion is raised, it is the being itself, as we apprehend the matter, that raises the emotion; and it raises it by means of one or other of its attributes. If it be urged, that we can in idea abstract a quality from the thing to which it belongs; it might be answered, that such abstraction may serve the purposes of reasoning, but is too faint to produce any sort of emotion. But it is sufficient for

Emotions are raised in us, not only by the qualities and actions of others, but also by their feelings. I cannot behold a man in distress, without partaking of his pain; nor in joy, without partaking of his pleasure.

The beings or things above described, occasion emotions in us, not only in the original survey, but also when recalled to the memory in idea. A field laid out with taste, is pleasant in the recollection, as well as when under our eye: a generous action described in words or colors, occasions a sensible emotion, as well as when we see it performed; and when we reflect upon the distress of any person, our pain is of the same kind with what we felt when eye-witnesses. In a word, an agreeable or disagreeable object recalled to the mind in idea, is the occasion of a pleasant or painful emotion, of the same kind with that produced when the object was present: the only difference is, that an idea being fainter than an original perception, the pleasure or pain produced by the former, is proportionably fainter than that produced by the latter.

Having explained the nature of an emotion, and mentioned several causes by which it is produced, we proceed to an observation of considerable importance in the science of human nature, which is, that desire follows some emotions, and not others. The emotions raised by a beautiful garden, a magnificent building, or a number of fine faces in a crowded assembly, is seldom accompanied with desire. Other emotions are accompanied with desire: emotions, for example, raised by human actions and qualities. A virtuous action raises in every spectator a pleasant emotion, which is commonly attended with desire to reward the author of the action: a vicious action, on the contrary, produces a painful emotion, attended with desire to punish the delinquent. Even things inanimate often raise emotions accompanied with desire. Witness the goods of fortune, which are objects of desire almost universally; and the desire, when immoderate, obtains the name of *avarice*. The pleasant emotion produced in a spectator by a capital picture in the possession of a prince, is seldom accompanied with desire; but if such a picture be exposed to sale, desire of having or possessing is the natural consequence of a strong emotion.

It is a truth verified by induction, that every passion is accompanied with desire; and if an emotion be sometimes accompanied with desire, and sometimes not, it comes to be a material inquiry, in what respect a passion differs from an emotion. Is passion in its nature or feeling distinguishable from emotion? I have been apt to think that there must be such a distinction; but, after the strictest

the present purpose to answer, that the eye never abstracts; by that organ we perceive things as they really exist, and never perceive a quality as separated from the subject. Hence it must be evident, that emotions are raised, not by qualities abstractly considered, but by the substance or body so and so qualified. Thus, a spreading oak raises a pleasant emotion, by means of its color, figure, umbrage, &c. It is not the color, strictly speaking, that produces the emotion, but the tree colored: it is not the figure abstractly considered that produces the emotion, but the tree of a certain figure. And hence, by the way, it appears, that the beauty of such an object is complex, resolvable into several beauties more simple.

examination, I cannot perceive any. What is love, for example, but a pleasant emotion raised by a sight or idea of the beloved female, joined with desire of enjoyment? In what else consists the passion of resentment, but in a painful emotion occasioned by the injury, accompanied with desire to chastise the guilty person? In general, as to passion of every kind, we find no more in its composition, than the particulars now mentioned—an emotion pleasant or painful, accompanied with desire. What then shall we say? Are *passion* and *emotion* synonymous terms? That cannot be averred; because no feeling nor agitation of the mind void of desire, is termed a passion; and we have discovered, that there are many emotions which pass away without raising desire of any kind. How is the difficulty to be solved? There appears to me but one solution, which I relish the more, as it renders the doctrine of the passions and emotions simple and perspicuous. The solution follows. An internal motion or agitation of the mind, when it passes away without desire, is denominated *an emotion*: when desire follows, the motion or agitation is denominated *a passion*. A fine face, for example, raises in me a pleasant feeling. If that feeling vanish without producing any effect, it is in proper language an emotion; but if the feeling, by reiterated views of the object, become sufficiently strong to occasion desire, it loses its name of emotion, and acquires that of passion. The same holds in all the other passions. The painful feeling raised in a spectator by a slight injury done to a stranger, being accompanied with no desire of revenge, is termed an emotion; but that injury raises in the stranger a stronger emotion, which being accompanied with desire of revenge, is a passion. External expressions of distress produce, in the spectator, a painful feeling, which being sometimes so slight as to pass away without any effect, is an emotion; but if the feeling be so strong as to prompt desire of affording relief, it is a passion, and is termed *pity*: envy is emulation in excess; if the exaltation of a competitor be barely disagreeable, the painful feeling is an emotion; if it produce desire to depress him, it is a passion.

To prevent mistakes, it must be observed, that desire here is taken in its proper sense; namely, that internal act, which, by influencing the will, makes us proceed to action. Desire in a lax sense respects also actions and events that depend not on us; as when I desire that my friend may have a son to represent him, or that my country may flourish in arts and sciences: but such internal act is more properly termed a *wish* than a *desire*.

Having distinguished passion from emotion, we proceed to consider passion more at large, with respect, especially, to its power of producing action.

We have daily and constant experience for our authority, that no man ever proceeds to action but by means of an antecedent desire or impulse. So well established is this observation, and so deeply rooted in the mind, that we can scarcely imagine a different system of action: even a child will say familiarly, what should make me do this or that, when I have no desire to do it? Taking it then for granted, that the existence of action depends on antecedent desire, it follows, that

where there is no desire there can be no action. This opens another shining distinction between emotions and passions. The former, being without desire, are in their nature quiescent: the desire included in the latter, prompts one to act in order to fulfil that desire, or, in other words, to gratify the passion.

The cause of a passion is sufficiently explained above: it is that being or thing, which, by raising desire, converts an emotion into a passion: When we consider a passion with respect to its power of prompting action, that same being or thing is termed its *object*. A fine woman, for example, raises the passion of love, which is directed to her as its object: a man, by injuring me, raises my resentment, and becomes thereby the object of my resentment. Thus the cause of a passion, and its object, are the same in different respects. An emotion, on the other hand, being in its nature quiescent, and merely a passive feeling, must have a cause; but cannot be said, properly speaking, to have an object.

The objects of our passions may be distinguished into two kinds, general and particular. A man, a house, a garden, is a particular object: fame, esteem, opulence, honor, are general objects, because each of them comprehends many particulars. The passions directed to general objects, are commonly termed *appetites*, in contradistinction to passions directed to particular objects, which retain their proper name. Thus we say an appetite for fame, for glory, for conquest, for riches; but we say the passion of friendship, of love, of gratitude, of envy, of resentment. And there is a material difference between appetites and passions, which makes it proper to distinguish them by different names. The latter have no existence till a proper object be presented; whereas the former exist first, and then are directed to an object. A passion comes after its object; an appetite goes before it, which is obvious in the appetites of hunger, thirst, and animal love, and is the same in the other appetites above mentioned.

By an object so powerful as to make a deep impression, the mind is inflamed, and hurried to action with a strong impulse. Where the object is less powerful, so as not to inflame the mind, nothing is felt but desire without any sensible perturbation. The principle of duty affords one instance: the desire generated by an object of duty, being commonly moderate, moves us to act calmly, without any violent impulse; but if the mind happen to be inflamed with the importance of the object, in that case desire of doing our duty becomes a warm passion.

The actions of brute creatures are generally directed by instinct, meaning blind impulse or desire, without any view to consequences. Man is framed to be governed by reason: he commonly acts with deliberation, in order to bring about some desirable end; and in that case his actions are means employed to bring about the end desired. Thus I give charity in order to relieve a person from want; I perform a grateful action as a duty incumbent on me; and I fight for my country in order to repel its enemies. At the same time, there are human actions that are not governed by reason, nor are done with any view to consequences. Infants, like brutes, are mostly



governed by instinct, without the least view to any end, good or ill. And even adult persons act sometimes instinctively. Thus one in extreme hunger snatches at food, without the slightest consideration whether it be salutary : avarice prompts to accumulate wealth, without the least view of use ; and thereby absurdly converts means into an end : and animal love often hurries to fruition, without a thought even of gratification.

A passion when it flames so high as to impel us to act blindly without any view to consequences, good or ill, may in that state be termed *instinctive* ; and when it is so moderate as to admit reason, and to prompt actions with a view to an end, it may, in that state, be termed *deliberative*.

With respect to actions exerted as means to an end, desire to bring about the end is what determines one to exert the action ; and desire considered in that view is termed a *motive*. Thus the same mental act that is termed *desire* with respect to an end in view, is termed a *motive* with respect to its power of determining one to act. Instinctive actions have a cause ; namely, the impulse of the passion : but they cannot be said to have a motive, because they are not done with any view to consequences.

We learn from experience, that the gratification of desire is pleasant ; and the foresight of that pleasure becomes often an additional motive for acting. Thus a child eats by the mere impulse of hunger : a young man thinks of the pleasure of gratification, which being a motive for him to eat, fortifies the original impulse : and a man farther advanced in life, has the additional motive, that it will contribute to his health.\*

From these premises, it is easy to determine with accuracy, what passions and actions are selfish, and what social. It is the end in view that ascertains the class to which they belong : where the end in view is my own good, they are selfish : where the end in view is the good of another, they are social. Hence it follows, that instinctive actions, where we act blindly and merely by impulse, cannot be reckoned either social or selfish. Thus eating, when prompted by an impulse merely of nature, is neither social nor selfish ; but add a motive, that it will contribute to my pleasure or my health, and it becomes in a measure selfish. On the other hand, when affection moves me to exert an action to the end solely of advancing my friend's happiness, without regard to my own gratification, the action is justly denominated *social* ; and so is also the affection that is its cause : if another motive be added, that gratifying the affection will also contribute to my own happiness, the action becomes partly selfish. If charity be given with the single view of relieving a person from distress, the action is purely social ; but if it be partly in view to enjoy the pleasure of a virtuous act, the action is so far selfish.†

\* One exception there is, and that is remorse, when it is so violent as to make a man desire to punish himself. The gratification here is far from being pleasant. See p. 99 of this volume. But a single exception, instead of overturning a general rule, is rather a confirmation of it.

† A selfish motive proceeding from a social principle, such as that mentioned, is the most respectable of all selfish motives. To enjoy the pleasure of a virtuous

Animal love when carried into action by natural impulse singly, is neither social nor selfish: when exerted with a view to gratification, it is selfish: when the motive of giving pleasure to its object is superadded, it is partly social, partly selfish. A just action, when prompted by the principle of duty solely, is neither social nor selfish. When I perform an act of justice with a view to the pleasure of gratification, the action is selfish: I pay debt for my own sake, not with a view to benefit my creditor. But suppose the money has been advanced by a friend without interest, purely to oblige me: in that case, together with the motive of gratification, there arises a motive of gratitude, which respects the creditor solely, and prompts me to act in order to do him good; and the action is partly social, partly selfish. Suppose again I meet with a surprising and unexpected act of generosity, that inspires me with love to my benefactor, and the utmost gratitude. I burn to do him good: he is the sole object of my desire; and my own pleasure in gratifying the desire, vanishes out of sight. In this case, the action I perform is purely social. Thus it happens, that when a social motive becomes strong, the action is exerted with a view singly to the object of the passion, and self never comes in view. The same effect of stifling selfish motives, is equally remarkable in other passions that are in no view social. An action, for example, done to gratify my ambitious views, is selfish; but if my ambition become headstrong, and blindly impel me to action, the action is neither selfish nor social. A slight degree of resentment, where my chief view in acting is the pleasure arising to myself from gratifying the passion, is justly denominated *selfish*. Where revenge flames so high as to have no other aim but the destruction of its object, it is no longer selfish; but, in opposition to a social passion, may be termed *dissocial*.\*

When this analysis of human nature is considered, not one article of which can with truth be controverted, there is reason to be surprised at the blindness of some philosophers, who, by dark and confused notions, are led to deny all motives to action but what arise from self-love. Man, for aught appears, might possibly have been so framed, as to be susceptible of no passions but what have self for their object: but man thus framed would be ill fitted for society: his constitution partly selfish, partly social, fits him much better for his present situation.†

action, one must be virtuous; and to enjoy the pleasure of a charitable action, one must think charity laudable at least, if not a duty. It is otherwise where a man gives charity merely for the sake of ostentation; for this he may do without having any pity or benevolence in his temper.

\* This word, hitherto not in use, seems to fulfil all that is required by Demetrius Phalereus (*Of Elocution*, sect. 96.) in coining a new word: first, that it be perspicuous; and next, that it be in the tone of the language; that we may not, says our author, introduce among the Grecian vocables, words that sound like those of Phrygia or Scythia.

† As the benevolence of many human actions is beyond the possibility of doubt, the argument commonly insisted on for reconciling such actions to the selfish system, is, that the only motive I can have to perform a benevolent action, or an action of any kind, is the pleasure that it affords me. So much then is yielded, that we are pleased when we do good to others: which is a fair admission of the principle of benevolence; for without that principle, what pleasure could one have in



Of self, every one has a direct perception; of other things we have no knowledge but by means of their attributes: and hence it is, that of self the perception is more lively than of any other thing. Self is an agreeable object: and for the reason now given, must be more agreeable than any other object. Is this sufficient to account for the prevalence of self-love?

In the foregoing part of this chapter it is suggested, that some circumstances make beings or things fit objects for desire, others not. This hint ought to be pursued. It is a truth ascertained by universal experience, that a thing which in our apprehension is beyond reach, never is the object of desire. No man in his right senses desires to walk on the clouds, or to descend to the centre of the earth: we may amuse ourselves in a reverie, with building castles in the air, and wishing for what can never happen: but such things never move desire. And indeed a desire to do what we are sensible is beyond our power, would be altogether absurd. In the next place, though the difficulty of attainment, with respect to things within reach, often inflames desire; yet, where the prospect of attainment is faint, and the event extremely uncertain, the object, however agreeable, seldom raises any strong desire. Thus beauty, or any other good quality, in a woman of rank, seldom raises love in a man greatly her inferior. In the third place, different objects, equally within reach, raise emotions in different degrees; and when desire accompanies any of these emotions, its strength, as is natural, is proportioned to that of its cause. Hence the remarkable difference among desires, directed to beings inanimate, animate, and rational. The emotion caused by a rational being, is out of measure stronger than any caused by an animal without reason; and an emotion raised by such an animal, is stronger than what is caused by any thing inanimate. There is a separate reason why desire of which a rational being is the object, should be the strongest: our desires swell by partial gratification; and the means we have of gratifying desire, by benefiting or harming a rational being, are without end. Desire directed to an inanimate being, susceptible neither of pleasure nor pain, is not capable of a higher gratification than that of acquiring the property. Hence it is, that though every emotion accompanied with desire, is strictly speaking a passion; yet commonly none of these are denominated passions, but where a sensible being, capable of pleasure and pain, is the object.

#### SECTION II.

Speech the most powerful means by which one being can display himself to another—Music may be rendered the means of promoting effeminacy and luxury; but its refined pleasures humanize and polish the mind—The effect of music on the Arcadians, an example—The pernicious effect of English comedy.

UPON a review I find the foregoing section almost wholly employed upon emotions and passions raised by objects of sight, though

doing good to others? And admitting a principle of benevolence, why may it not be a motive to action, as well as selfishness is, or any other principle?

they are also raised by objects of hearing. As this happened without intention, merely because such objects are more familiar than others, I find it proper to add a short section upon the power of sounds to raise emotions and passions.

I begin with comparing sounds and visible objects with respect to their influence upon the mind. It has already been observed that of all external objects, rational beings, especially of our own species, have the most powerful influence in raising emotions and passions; and, as speech is the most powerful of all the means by which one human being can display itself to another, the objects of the eye must so far yield preference to those of the ear. With respect to inanimate objects of sight, sounds may be so contrived as to raise both terror and mirth beyond what can be done by any such object. Music has a commanding influence over the mind, especially in conjunction with words. Objects of sight may indeed contribute to the same end, but more faintly; as where a love poem is rehearsed in a shady grove, or on the bank of a purling stream. But sounds, which are vastly more ductile and various, readily accompany all the social affections expressed in a poem, especially emotions of love and pity.

Music having at command a great variety of emotions, may, like many objects of sight, be made to promote luxury and effeminacy; of which we have instances without number, especially in vocal music. But, with respect to its pure and refined pleasures, music goes hand in hand with gardening and architecture, her sister-arts, in humanizing and polishing the mind;\* of which none can doubt who have felt the charms of music. But, if authority be required, the following passage from a grave historian, eminent for solidity of judgment, must have the greatest weight. Polybius, speaking of the people of Cynætha, an Arcadian tribe, has the following train of reflections. "As the Arcadians have always been celebrated for their piety, humanity, and hospitality, we are naturally led to inquire, how it has happened that the Cynætheans are distinguished from the other Arcadians, by savage manners, wickedness, and cruelty. I can attribute this difference to no other cause, but a total neglect among the people of Cynætha, of an institution established among the ancient Arcadians with a nice regard to their manners and their climate: I mean the discipline and exercise of that genuine and perfect music, which is useful in every state, but necessary to the Arcadians; whose manners, originally rigid and austere, made it of the greatest importance to incorporate this art into the very essence of their government. All men know that, in Arcadia, the children are early taught to perform hymns and songs composed in honor of their gods and heroes; and that, when they have learned the music of Timotheus and Philoxenus, they assemble yearly in the public theatres, dancing with emulation to the sound of flutes, and acting in games adapted to their tender years. The Arcadians, even in their private feasts, never employ hirelings, but each man sings in his turn. They are also taught all the military steps and

\* See Chapter 24.

motions to the sound of instruments, which they perform yearly in the theatres, at the public charge. To me it is evident, that these solemnities were introduced, not for idle pleasure, but to soften the rough and stubborn temper of the Arcadians, occasioned by the coldness of a high country. But the Cynætheans, neglecting these arts, have become so fierce and savage, that there is not another city in Greece so remarkable for frequent and great enormities. This consideration ought to engage the Arcadians never to relax, in any degree, their musical discipline; and it ought to open the eyes of the Cynætheans, and make them sensible of what importance it would be to restore music to their city, and every discipline that may soften their manners; for otherwise they can never hope to subdue their brutal ferocity.”\*

No one will be surprised to hear such influence attributed to music, when, with respect to another of the fine arts, he finds a living instance of an influence no less powerful. It is unhappily indeed the reverse of the former; for it has done more mischief by corrupting British manners, than music ever did good by purifying those of Arcadia.

The licentious court of Charles II., among its many disorders, engendered a pest, the virulence of which subsists to this day. The English comedy, copying the manners of the court, became abominably licentious; and continues so with very little softening. It is there an established rule, to deck out the chief characters with every vice in fashion, however gross. But, as such characters viewed in a true light would be disgusting, care is taken to disguise their deformity under the embellishments of wit, sprightliness, and good humor, which in mixed company makes a capital figure. It requires not much thought to discover the poisonous influence of such plays. A young man of figure, emancipated, at last, from the severity and restraint of a college education, repairs to the capital disposed to every sort of excess. The playhouse becomes his favorite amusement; and he is enchanted with the gayety and splendor of the chief personages. The disgust which vice gives him at first, soon wears off, to make way for new notions, more liberal in his opinion; by which a sovereign contempt of religion, and a declared war upon the chastity of wives, maids, and widows, are converted from being infamous vices to be fashionable virtues. The infection spreads gradually through all ranks, and becomes universal. How gladly would I listen to any one who should undertake to prove, that what I have been describing is chimerical! but the dissoluteness of our young men of birth will not suffer me to doubt its reality. Sir Harry Wildair has completed many a rake; and in the *Suspicious Husband*, Ranger, the humble imitator of Sir Harry, has had no slight influence in spreading that character. What woman, tinctured with the playhouse morals, would not be the sprightly, the witty, though dissolute Lady Townly, rather than the cold, the sober, though virtuous Lady Grace? How odious ought writers to be, who thus employ the talents they have received from their Maker

\* Polybius, Lib. 4. cap. 3.

most traitorously against himself, by endeavoring to corrupt and disfigure his creatures! If the comedies of Congreve did not rack him with remorse in his last moments, he must have been lost to all sense of virtue. Nor will it afford any excuse to such writers, that their comedies are entertaining; unless it could be maintained, that wit and sprightliness are better suited to a vicious than a virtuous character. It would grieve me to think so; and the direct contrary is exemplified in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where we are highly entertained with the conduct of two ladies, not more remarkable for mirth and spirit than for the strictest purity of manners.

### SECTION III.

An emotion followed by desire termed a passion—The joy of gratification, an emotion—An event contrary to our desire, produces pain—An unexpected event, fortunate, or unfortunate, produces joy or sorrow—A sudden removal of great pain, the highest source of joy—Why this is the case—The difficulty of accounting for the extreme pleasure that follows a cessation of bodily pain—The effect of the gradual diminution of pain.

THIS subject was purposely reserved for a separate section, because it could not, with perspicuity, be handled under the general head. An emotion accompanied with desire is termed a *passion*; and when the desire is fulfilled, the passion is said to be gratified. Now, the gratification of every passion must be pleasant; for nothing can be more natural than that the accomplishment of any wish or desire should affect us with joy. I know of no exception but when a man, stung with remorse, desires to chastise and punish himself. The joy of gratification is properly called an *emotion*; because it makes us happy in our present situation, and is ultimate in its nature, not having a tendency to any thing beyond. On the other hand, sorrow must be the result of an event contrary to what we desire; for if the accomplishment of desire produce joy, it is equally natural that disappointment should produce sorrow.

An event, fortunate or unfortunate, that falls out by accident, without being foreseen or thought of, and which, therefore, could not be the object of desire, raises an emotion of the same kind as that now mentioned: but the cause must be different; for there can be no gratification where there is no desire. We have not, however, far to seek for a cause: it is involved in the nature of man, that he cannot be indifferent to an event that concerns him or any of his connections: if it be fortunate, it gives him joy; if unfortunate, it gives him sorrow.

In no situation does joy rise to a greater height, than upon the removal of any violent distress of mind or body; and in no situation does sorrow rise to a greater height, than upon the removal of what makes us happy. The sensibility of our nature serves, in part, to account for these effects. Other causes concur. One is, that violent distress always raises an anxious desire to be free from it; and therefore its removal is a high gratification: nor can we be possessed of any thing that makes us happy without wishing its con-

tinuance; and therefore its removal, by crossing our wishes, must create sorrow. The principle of contrast is another cause: an emotion of joy arising upon the removal of pain, is increased by contrast when we reflect upon our former distress: an emotion of sorrow, upon being deprived of any good, is increased by contrast when we reflect upon our former happiness:

*Jaffier.* There's not a wretch that lives on common charity,  
But's happier than me. For I have known  
The luscious sweets of plenty: every night  
Have slept with soft content about my head,  
And never wak'd but to a joyful morning.  
Yet now must fall like a full ear of corn,  
Whose blossom 'scap'd, yet's withered in the ripening.

*Venice Preserved*, Act I. Sc. 1.

It has always been reckoned difficult to account for the extreme pleasure that follows a cessation of bodily pain; as when one, for instance, is relieved from the rack. What is said explains this difficulty, in the easiest and simplest manner: cessation of bodily pain is not of itself a pleasure, for a *non-ens* or a negative can neither give pleasure nor pain; but man is so framed by nature as to rejoice when he is eased of pain, as well as to be sorrowful when deprived of any enjoyment. This branch of our constitution is chiefly the cause of the pleasure. The gratification of desire comes in as an accessory cause: and contrast joins its force, by increasing the sense of our present happiness. In the case of an acute pain, a peculiar circumstance contributes its part: the brisk circulation of the animal spirits occasioned by acute pain, continues after the pain is gone, and produces a very pleasant emotion. Sickness has not that effect, because it is always attended with a depression of spirits.

Hence it is, that the gradual diminution of acute pain, occasions a mixt emotion, partly pleasant, partly painful: the partial diminution produces joy in proportion; but the remaining pain balances the joy. This mixt emotion, however, has no long endurance; for the joy that arises upon the diminution of pain, soon vanishes, and leaves in the undisturbed possession, that degree of pain which remains.

What is above observed about bodily pain, is equally applicable to the distresses of the mind; and, accordingly, it is a common artifice, to prepare us for the reception of good news by alarming our fears.

#### SECT. IV.

A feeling that can neither be called an emotion nor a passion—Instances of illustration—This feeling resembles the appetites—It is raised by virtuous actions only—The effect of it in promoting virtue.

ONE feeling there is that merits a deliberate view, for its singularity as well as utility. Whether to call it an emotion or a passion, seems uncertain: the former it can scarcely be, because it involves desire; the latter it can scarcely be, because it has no object. But this feeling, and its nature, will be best understood from examples. A signal act of gratitude produces in the spectator or reader, not

only love or esteem for the author, but also a separate feeling, being a vague feeling of gratitude, without an object—a feeling, however, that disposes the spectator or reader to acts of gratitude, more than upon an ordinary occasion. This feeling is overlooked by writers upon ethics; but a man may be convinced of its reality, by attentively watching his own heart when he thinks warmly of any signal act of gratitude: he will be conscious of the feeling, as distinct from the esteem or admiration he has for the grateful person. The feeling is singular in the following respect—that it is accompanied with a desire to perform acts of gratitude, without having any object; though in that state, the mind, wonderfully bent on an object, neglects no opportunity to vent itself: any act of kindness or good will, that would pass unregarded upon another occasion, is greedily seized; and the vague feeling is converted into a real passion of gratitude: in such a state, favors are returned double.

In like manner, a courageous action produces in a spectator the passion of admiration directed to the author: and beside this well-known passion, a separate feeling is raised in the spectator, which may be called *an emotion of courage*; because, while under its influence, he is conscious of a boldness and intrepidity beyond what is usual, and longs for proper objects upon which to exert this motion.

Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis  
Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.  
*Æneid, iv. 158.*

And rather would the tusky boar attend,  
Or see the tawny lion downward bend.

Non altramente il tauro, ove l'irriti  
Geloso amor con stimoli pungenti,  
Horribilmente mugge, e co'muggiti  
Gli spirti in sè risveglia, e l'ire ardenti:  
E'l corno aguzza ai tronchi, e par ch' inviti  
Con vani colpi alla battaglia i venti.  
Sparge col piè l'arena; e'l suo rivale  
Da lunge sfida a guerra aspra e mortale.  
*Tasso, Canto 7. st. 55.*

Like as a bull when prickt with iealousie  
He spies the rivall of his hot desire  
Through all the fields both bellow, rore and crie,  
And with his thund'ring voice augments his ire,  
And threat'ning battaile to the emptie skie,  
Teares with his horne, each tree, plant, bush and brire,  
And with his foot casts up the sand on hight,  
Defying his strong foe to deadly fight.—*Fairfax.*

So full of valor that they smote the air  
For breathing in their faces.

*Tempest, Act IV. Sc. 4.*

The emotions raised by music, independent of words, must be all of this nature: courage roused by martial music performed upon instruments without a voice, cannot be directed to any object; nor can grief or pity raised by melancholy music of the same kind have an object.

For another example, let us figure some grand and heroic action,



highly agreeable to the spectator: beside veneration for the author, the spectator feels in himself an unusual dignity of character, which disposes him to great and noble actions: and herein chiefly consists the extreme delight every one takes in the histories of conquerors and heroes.

This singular feeling, which may be termed *the sympathetic emotion of virtue*, resembles, in one respect, the well-known appetites that lead to the propagation and preservation of the species. The appetites of hunger, thirst, and animal love, arise in the mind before they are directed to any object; and in no case whatever is the mind more solicitous for a proper object, than when under the influence of any of these appetites.

The feeling which I have endeavored to unfold, may well be termed *the sympathetic emotion of virtue*; for it is raised in the spectator, or in a reader, by virtuous actions of every kind, and by no others. When we contemplate a virtuous action, which fails not to prompt our love for the author, our propensity, at the same time, to such actions, is so much enlivened, as to become for a time an actual emotion. But no man has a propensity to vice as such: on the contrary, a wicked deed disgusts him, and makes him abhor the author; and this abhorrence is a strong antidote against vice, as long as any impression remains of the wicked action.

In a rough road, a halt to view a fine country is refreshing; and here a delightful prospect opens upon us. It is indeed wonderful to observe what incitements there are to virtue in the human frame: justice is perceived to be our duty; and it is guarded by natural punishments, from which the guilty never escape; to perform noble and generous actions, a warm sense of their dignity and superior excellence is a most efficacious incitement.\* And to leave virtue in no quarter unsupported, here is unfolded an admirable contrivance, by which good example commands the heart, and adds to virtue, the force of habit. We approve every virtuous action, and bestow our affection on the author; but if virtuous actions produced no other effect upon us, good example would not have great influence: the sympathetic emotion under consideration bestows upon good example the utmost influence, by prompting us to imitate what we admire. This singular emotion will readily find an object upon which to exert itself: and at any rate, it never exists without producing some effect; because virtuous emotions of that sort are, in some degree, an exercise of virtue; they are a mental exercise at least, if they appear not externally. And every exercise of virtue, internal and external, leads to habit; for a disposition or propensity of the mind, like a limb of the body, becomes stronger by exercise. Proper means, at the same time, being ever at hand, to raise this sympathetic emotion, its frequent reiteration may, in a good measure, supply the want of a more complete exercise. Thus, by proper discipline, every person may acquire a settled habit of virtue: intercourse with men of worth, histories of generous and disinterested actions, and frequent meditation upon them, keep the sympathetic

\* See *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*, part 1. ess. 2. ch. 1.

emotion in constant exercise, which by degrees introduces a habit, and confirms the authority of virtue: with respect to education in particular, what a spacious and commodious avenue to the heart of a young person is here opened!

## SECTION V.

The relations between objects productive of emotions and passions—The relation between a being and its qualities—The relation between a principal and its accessories—The effect of veneration for relics—The respect and esteem which great men command, transferred to their dress, &c.—Hatred extends to all connections—These emotions properly termed secondary, being produced by primary antecedent emotions—The power of self-love—Family connections—Friendship produces hatred towards the enemy of our friend—Slight connections not favorable to the communication of passion—Exceptions to this—The influence of order in the communication of passion—The two exceptions—The effect of marriage in obstructing the affections—One passion generated by another without a change of the object.

In the first chapter it is observed, that the relations by which things are connected, have a remarkable influence on the train of our ideas. I here add, that they have an influence, no less remarkable, in the production of emotions and passions. Beginning with the former, an agreeable object makes every thing connected with it appear agreeable; for the mind, gliding sweetly and easily through related objects, carries along the agreeable properties it meets with in its passage, and bestows them on the present object, which thereby appears more agreeable than when considered apart.\* This reason may appear obscure and metaphysical, but the fact is beyond all dispute. No relation is more intimate than the relation between a being and its qualities: and accordingly, every quality in a hero, even the slightest, makes a greater figure than more substantial qualities in others. The propensity of carrying along agreeable properties from one object to another, is sometimes so vigorous as to convert defects into properties: the wry neck of Alexander was imitated by his courtiers as a real beauty, without intention to flatter: Lady Piercy, speaking of her husband Hotspur,

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By his light  
Did all the chivalry of England move,  
To do brave acts. He was indeed the glass,  
Wherein the noble youths did dress themselves.  
He had no legs that practis'd not his gait:  
And speaking thick, which Nature made his blemish,

\* Such proneness has the mind to this communication of properties, that we often find a property ascribed to a related object, of which naturally it is not susceptible. Sir Richard Grenville in a single ship, being surprised by the Spanish fleet, was advised to retire. He utterly refused to turn from the enemy; declaring, "he would rather die, than dishonor himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship." *Hakluyt*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 169. To aid the communication of properties in instances like the present, there always must be a momentary personification: a ship must be imagined a sensible being, to make it susceptible of honor or dishonor. In the battle of Mantinea, Epaminondas being mortally wounded, was carried to his tent in a manner dead: recovering his senses, the first thing he inquired about was his shield; which being brought, he kissed it as the companion of his valor and glory. It must be remarked, that among the Greeks and Romans it was deemed infamous for a soldier to return from battle without his shield.



Became the accents of the valiant:

For those who could speak slow and tardily,

Would turn their own perfection to abuse,

To seem like him.

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act II. Sc. 6.*

The same communication of passion obtains in the relation of principal and accessory. Pride, of which self is the object, expands itself upon a house, a garden, servants, equipage, and every accessory. A lover addresses his mistress's glove in the following terms:

Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine.

Veneration for relics has the same natural foundation; and that foundation with the superstructure of superstition, has occasioned much blind devotion to the most ridiculous objects—to the supposed milk, for example, of the Virgin Mary, or the supposed blood of St. Janivarius.\* A temple is in a proper sense an accessory of the deity to which it is dedicated: Diana is chaste, and not only her temple, but the very icicle which hangs on it, must partake of that property:

The noble sister of Poplicola,

The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle

That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,

And hangs on Dian's temple.

*Coriolanus, Act V. Sc. 3.*

Thus it is, that the respect and esteem, which the great, the powerful, the opulent, naturally command, are, in some measure, communicated to their dress, to their manners, and to all their connections: and it is this communication of properties, which, prevailing, even over the natural taste of beauty, helps to give currency to what is called *the fashion*.

By means of the same easiness of communication, every bad quality in an enemy is spread upon all his connections. The sentence pronounced against Ravallac for the assassination of Henry IV. of France, ordains, that the house in which he was born should be razed to the ground, and that no other building should ever be erected on that spot. Enmity will extend passion to objects still less connected. The Swiss suffer no peacocks to live, because the Duke of Austria, their ancient enemy, wears a peacock's tail in his crest. A relation more slight and transitory than that of enmity, may have the same effect: thus the bearer of bad tidings becomes an object of aversion:

Fellow, begone; I cannot brook thy sight;

This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

*King John, Act III. Sc. 1.*

Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news

Hath but a losing office: and his tongue

Sounds ever after, as a sullen bell

Remember'd, tolling a departed friend.

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 3.*

In borrowing thus properties from one object to bestow them on another, it is not any object indifferently that will answer. The

\* But why worship the cross which is supposed to be that upon which our Savior suffered? That cross ought to be the object of hatred, not of veneration. If it be urged, that as an instrument of Christ's suffering it was salutary to mankind, I answer, Why is not also Pontius Pilate revered, Caiaphas the high priest, and Judas Iscariot?

object from which properties are borrowed, must be such as to warm the mind and enliven the imagination. Thus the beauty of a mistress, which inflames the imagination, is readily communicated to a glove, as above mentioned; but the greatest beauty of which a glove is susceptible, touches the mind so little, as to be entirely dropped in passing from it to the owner. In general, it may be observed, that any dress upon a fine woman is becoming; but that ornaments upon one who is homely, must be elegant indeed to have any remarkable effect in improving her appearance.\*

The emotions produced as above may properly be termed *secondary*, being occasioned either by antecedent emotions or antecedent passions, which in that respect may be termed *primary*. And to complete the present theory, I must add, that a secondary emotion may readily swell into a passion for the accessory object, provided the accessory be a proper object for desire. Thus it happens that one passion is often productive of another: examples are without number; the sole difficulty is a proper choice. I begin with self-love, and the power it has to generate love to children. Every man, beside making part of a greater system, like a comet, a planet, or a satellite only, has a less system of his own, in the centre of which he represents the sun darting his fire and heat all around; especially upon his nearest connections: the connection between a man and his children, fundamentally that of cause and effect, becomes, by the addition of other circumstances, the completest that can be among individuals; and therefore self-love, the most vigorous of all passions, is readily expanded upon children. The secondary emotion they produce by means of their connection, is sufficiently strong to move desire, even from the beginning; and the new passion swells by degrees, till it rivals, in some measure, self-love, the primary passion. To demonstrate the truth of this theory, I urge the following argument. Remorse for betraying a friend, or murdering an enemy in cold blood, makes a man even hate himself: in that state, he is not conscious of affection to his children, but rather of disgust or ill-will. What cause can be assigned for that change, other than the hatred he has to himself, which is expanded upon his children. And if so, may we not, with equal reason, derive from self-love, some part, at least, of the affection a man generally has to them?

The affection a man bears to his blood-relations, depends partly on the same principle: self-love is also expanded upon them; and the communicated passion is more or less vigorous in proportion to the degree of connection. Nor does self-love rest here: it is, by the force of connection, communicated even to things inanimate: and hence the affection a man bears to his property, and to every thing he calls his own.

Friendship, less vigorous than self-love, is, for that reason, less

\* A house and gardens surrounded with pleasant fields, all in good order, bestow greater lustre upon the owner than at first will be imagined. The beauties of the former are, by intimacy of connection, readily communicated to the latter; and if it have been done at the expense of the owner himself, we naturally transfer to him whatever of design, art, or taste, appears in the performance. Should not this be a strong motive with proprietors to embellish and improve their fields?

apt to communicate itself to the friend's children, or other relations. Instances, however, are not wanting of such communicated passion arising from friendship when it is strong. Friendship may go higher in the matrimonial state than in any other condition; and Otway, in *Venice Preserved*, takes advantage of that circumstance: in the scene where Belvidera sues to her father for pardon, she is represented as pleading her mother's merits, and the resemblance she bore to her mother:

*Priuli.* My daughter!

*Belvidera.* Yes, your daughter by a mother  
Virtuous and noble, faithful to your honor,  
Obedient to your will, kind to your wishes,  
Dear to your arms. By all the joys she gave you  
When in her blooming years she was your treasure,  
Look kindly on me; in my face behold  
The lineaments of hers y'have kiss'd so often,  
Pleading the cause of your poor cast-off child.

And again,

*Belvidera.* Lay me, I beg you, lay me  
By the dear ashes of my tender mother:  
She would have pitied me, had fate yet spar'd her.

*Venice Preserved*, Act V. Sc. 1.

This explains why any meritorious action, or any illustrious qualification, in my son or my friend, is apt to make me over-value myself: if I value my friend's wife or son upon account of their connection with him, it is still more natural that I should value myself upon account of my connection with him.

Friendship, or any other social affection, may, by changing the object, produce opposite effects. Pity, by interesting us strongly for the person in distress, must consequently inflame our resentment against the author of the distress: for, in general, the affection we have for any man, generates in us good-will to his friends, and ill-will to his enemies. Shakspeare shows great art in the funeral oration pronounced by Antony over the body of Cæsar. He first endeavors to excite grief in the hearers, by dwelling upon the deplorable loss of so great a man: this passion, interesting them strongly in Cæsar's fate, could not fail to produce a lively sense of the treachery and cruelty of the conspirators—an infallible method to inflame the resentment of the people beyond all bounds:

*Antony.* If you have tears, prepare to shed them now  
You all do know this mantle. I remember  
The first time ever Cæsar put it on;  
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,  
That day he overcame the Nervii——  
Look! in this place ran Cassius's dagger through;——  
See what a rent the envious Casca made.  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;  
And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it!  
As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd,  
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no:  
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel.  
Judge, oh you Gods! how dearly Cæsar lov'd him  
This, this, was the unkindest cut of all;  
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,  
 Quite vanquish'd him; then burst his mighty heart;  
 And, in his mantle muffling up his face,  
 Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell,  
 Even at the base of Pompey's statue.  
 O what a fall was there, my countrymen!  
 Then I and you, and all of us, fell down,  
 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.  
 O, now you weep; and I perceive you feel  
 The dint of pity; these are gracious drops.  
 Kind souls! what! weep you when you but behold  
 Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? look you here!  
 Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, by traitors.

*Julius Cæsar, Act III. Sc. 6.*

Had Antony endeavored to excite his audience to vengeance, without paving the way by raising their grief, his speech would not have made the same impression.

Hatred, and other dissocial passions, produce effects directly opposite to those above mentioned. If I hate a man, his children, his relations, nay his property, become to me objects of aversion: his enemies, on the other hand, I am disposed to esteem.

The more slight and transitory relations are not favorable to the communication of passion. Anger, when sudden and violent, is one exception; for, if the person who did the injury be removed out of reach, that passion will vent itself against any related object, however slight the relation be. Another exception makes a greater figure: a group of beings or things, becomes often the object of a communicated passion, even where the relation of the individuals to the percipient is but slight. Thus, though I put no value upon a single man for living in the same town with myself; my townsmen, however, considered in a body, are preferred before others. This is still more remarkable with respect to my countrymen in general: the grandeur of the complex objects swells the passion of self-love by the relation I have to my native country; and every passion, when it swells beyond its ordinary bounds, has a peculiar tendency to expand itself along related objects. In fact, instances are not rare, of persons, who upon all occasions are willing to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for their country. Such influence upon the mind of man has a complex object, or, more properly speaking, a general term.\*

The sense of order has influence in the communication of passion. It is a common observation, that a man's affection to his parents is less vigorous than to his children: the order of nature in descending to children, aids the transition of the affection: the ascent to a parent, contrary to that order, makes the transition more difficult. Gratitude to a benefactor is readily extended to his children; but not so readily to his parents. The difference, however, between the natural and inverted order, is not so considerable, but that it may be balanced by other circumstances. Pliny† gives an account of a woman of rank condemned to die for a crime; and, to avoid public shame, detained in prison to die of hunger: her life being prolong-

\* See Essays on Morality and Natural Religion, part 1. ess. 2. ch. 5.

† Lib. 7. cap. 36.

ed beyond expectation, it was discovered, that she was nourished by sucking milk from the breasts of her daughter. This instance of filial piety, which aided the transition, and made ascent no less easy than descent is commonly, procured a pardon to the mother, and a pension to both. The story of Androcles and the lion,\* may be accounted for in the same manner: the admiration, of which the lion was the object, for his kindness and gratitude to Androcles, produced good will to Androcles, and a pardon of his crime.

And this leads to other observations upon communicated passions. I love my daughter less after she is married, and my mother less after a second marriage: the marriage of my son or of my father diminishes not my affection so remarkably. The same observation holds with respect to friendship, gratitude, and other passions. The love I bear my friend, is but faintly extended to his married daughter: the resentment I have against a man is readily extended against children who make part of his family; not so readily against children who are foris-familiated, especially by marriage. This difference is also more remarkable in daughters than in sons. These are curious facts; and, in order to discover the cause, we must examine minutely that operation of the mind by which a passion is extended to a related object. In considering two things as related, the mind is not stationary, but passes and repasses from the one to the other, viewing the relation from each of them perhaps oftener than once; which holds more especially in considering a relation between things of unequal rank; as between the cause and the effect, or between a principal and an accessory. In contemplating, for example, the relation between a building and its ornaments, the mind is not satisfied with a single transition from the former to the latter; it must also view the relation, beginning at the latter, and passing from it to the former. This vibration of the mind in passing and repassing between things related, explains the facts above mentioned: the mind passes easily from the father to the daughter: but where the daughter is married, this new relation attracts the mind, and obstructs, in some measure, the return from the daughter to the father; and any circumstance that obstructs the mind in passing and repassing between its objects, occasions a like obstruction in the communication of passion. The marriage of a male obstructs less the easiness of transition; because a male is less sunk by the relation of marriage than a female.

The foregoing instances are of passion communicated from one object to another. But one passion may be generated by another, without change of object. It in general is observable, that a passion paves the way to others similar in their tone, whether directed to the same or to a different object; for the mind, heated by any passion, is, in that state, more susceptible of a new impression in a similar tone, than when cool and quiescent. It is a common observation, that pity generally produces friendship for a person in distress. One reason is, that pity interests us in its object, and recommends all its virtuous qualities: female beauty accordingly shows best in distress; being more apt to inspire love, than upon an ordinary occasion. But

\* Aulus Gellius, lib. 5. cap. 14.

the chief reason is, that pity, warming and melting the spectator, prepares him for the reception of other tender affections; and pity is readily improved into love or friendship, by a certain tenderness and concern for the object, which is the tone of both passions. The aptitude of pity to produce love, is beautifully illustrated by Shakespeare:

*Othello.* Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;  
Still questioned me the story of my life,  
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have past.  
I ran it through, e'en from my boyish days,  
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it:  
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field;  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach  
Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,  
And with it all my travel's history.

—All these to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline;  
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence,  
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse; which I observing,  
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means  
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,  
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
But not distinctively. I did consent,  
And often did beguile her of her tears,  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange—  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful—  
She wish'd she had not heard it:—yet she wish'd  
That Heaven had made her such a man:—she thank'd me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
And that would woo her. On this hint I spake:  
She lov'd me for the dangers I had past,  
And I lov'd her, that she did pity them:  
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd.

*Othello, Act I. Sc. 8.*

In this instance it will be observed that admiration concurred with pity to produce love.

#### SECTION VI.

**Fear** and anger, instinctive and deliberative—Fear provides for self-preservation by flight; anger, by resistance—Instinctive anger frequently raised by bodily pain and internal distress—Anger exhibited in its rare appearances only.

**FEAR** and anger, to answer the purposes of nature, are happily so contrived as to operate sometimes instinctively, sometimes deliberately, according to circumstances. As far as they are deliberate, they fall in with the general system, and require no particular explanation. If any object have a threatening appearance, reason sug-

gests means to avoid the danger: if a man be injured, the first thing he thinks of, is what revenge he shall take, and what means he shall employ. These particulars are no less obvious than natural. But, as the passions of fear and anger in their instinctive state, are less familiar to us, it may be acceptable to the reader to have them accurately delineated. He may also possibly be glad of an opportunity to have the nature of instinctive passions more fully explained, than there was formerly opportunity to do. I begin with fear.

Self-preservation is a matter of too great importance to be left entirely to the conduct of reason. Nature has acted here with her usual foresight. Fear and anger are passions that move us to act, sometimes deliberately, sometimes instinctively, according to circumstances; and by operating in the latter manner, they frequently afford security, when the slower operations of deliberate reason would be too late. We take nourishment commonly, not by the direction of reason, but by the impulse of hunger and thirst; and, in the same manner, we avoid danger by the impulse of fear, which often, before there is time for reflection, places us in safety. Here we have an illustrious instance of wisdom in the formation of man; for it is not within the reach of fancy to conceive any thing more artfully contrived to answer its purpose, than the instinctive passion of fear, which, upon the first surmise of danger, operates instantaneously. So little does the passion, in such instances, depend on reason, that it frequently operates in contradiction to it: a man who is not upon his guard cannot avoid shrinking at a blow, though he knows it to be aimed in sport; nor avoid closing his eyes at the approach of what may hurt them, though conscious that he is in no danger. And it also operates by impelling us to act even where we are conscious that our interposition can be of no service: if a passage boat, in a brisk gale, bear much to one side, I cannot avoid applying the whole force of my shoulders to set it upright; and, if my horse stumble, my hands and knees are instantly at work to prevent him from falling.

Fear provides for self-preservation by flying from harm; anger, by repelling it. Nothing, indeed, can be better contrived to repel or prevent injury, than anger or resentment: destitute of that passion, men, like defenceless lambs, would lie constantly open to mischief.\* Deliberate anger caused by a voluntary injury, is too well known to require any explanation. If my desire be to resent an affront, I must use means; and these means must be discovered by reflection: deliberation is here requisite; and in that case the passion seldom exceeds just bounds. But, where anger impels one suddenly to return a blow, even without thinking of doing mischief, the passion is instinctive; and it is chiefly in such a case that it is rash and ungovernable, because it operates blindly, without affording time for deliberation or foresight.

Instinctive anger is frequently raised by bodily pain; by a stroke,

\* Brasidas being bit by a mouse he had caught, let it slip out of his fingers: "No creature (says he) is so contemptible, but what may provide for its own safety, if it have courage."

*Plutarch, Apophthegmata.*



for example, on a tender part, which, ruffling the temper, and unhinging the mind, is in its tone similar to anger: and when a man is thus beforehand disposed to anger, he is not nice nor scrupulous about an object; the person who gave the stroke, however accidentally, is by an inflammable temper held a proper object, merely for having occasioned the pain. It is still more remarkable, that a stock or a stone by which I am hurt, becomes an object for my resentment: I am violently excited to crush it to atoms. The passion, indeed, in that case, can be but a single flash; for being entirely irrational, it must vanish with the first reflection. Nor is that irrational effect confined to bodily pain: internal distress, when excessive, may be the occasion of effects equally irrational: perturbation of mind occasioned by the apprehension of having lost a dear friend, will, in a fiery temper, produce momentary sparks of anger against that very friend, however innocent: thus Shakspeare, in the *Tempest*,

*Alonso.* ————— Sit down and rest.  
Ev'n here I will put off my hope, and keep it  
No longer for my flatterer; he is drown'd  
Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks  
Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

Act III. Sc. 3.

The final words, *Well, let him go*, are an expression of impatience and anger at Ferdinand, whose absence greatly distressed his father, dreading that he was lost in the storm. This nice operation of the human mind, is by Shakspeare exhibited upon another occasion, and finely painted in the tragedy of *Othello*: Iago, by dark hints and suspicious circumstances, had roused Othello's jealousy; which, however, appeared too slightly founded to be vented upon Desdemona, its proper object. The perturbation and distress of mind thereby occasioned, produced a momentary resentment against Iago, considered as occasioning the jealousy, though innocent:

*Othello.* Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;  
Be sure of it: give me the ocular proof,  
Or by the wrath of man's eternal soul  
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,  
Than answer my wak'd wrath.

*Iago.* Is't come to this?

*Othello.* Make me see't; or, at the least, to prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge or loop  
To hang a doubt on: or wo upon thy life!

*Iago.* My noble Lord——

*Othello.* If thou dost slander her, and torture me,  
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;  
On horror's head horrors accumulate;  
Do deeds to make heav'n weep, all earth amaz'd:  
For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.

*Othello*, Act II. Sc. 8.

This blind and absurd effect of anger is more gayly illustrated by Addison, in a story, the *dramatis personæ* of which are, a cardinal, and a spy retained in pay for intelligence. The cardinal is represented as minuting down the particulars. The spy begins with a low voice, "Such an one the advocate whispered to one of his friends within my hearing, that your Eminence was a very great poltroon;"



and after having given his patron time to take it down, adds, "That another called him a mercenary rascal in a public conversation." The cardinal replies, "Very well," and bids him go on. The spy proceeds, and loads him with reports of the same nature, till the cardinal rises in a fury, calls him an impudent scoundrel, and kicks him out of the room.\*

We meet with instances every day of resentment raised by loss at play, and wreaked on the cards or dice. But anger, a furious passion, is satisfied with a connection still slighter than that of cause and effect; of which Congreve, in the *Mourning Bride*, gives one beautiful example:

*Gonsalez.* Have comfort.

*Almeria.* Curs'd be that tongue that bids me be of comfort,  
Curs'd my own tongue that could not move his pity,  
Curs'd these weak hands that could not hold him here,  
For he is gone to doom Alphonso's death.

Act IV. Sc. 8.

I have chosen to exhibit anger in its more rare appearances, for in these we can best trace its nature and extent. In the examples above given, it appears to be an absurd passion, and altogether irrational. But we ought to consider, that it is not the intention of nature to subject this passion, in every instance, to reason and reflection: it was given us to prevent or to repel injuries: and, like fear, it often operates blindly and instinctively, without the least view to consequences: the very first apprehension of harm, sets it in motion to repel injury by punishment. Were it more cool and deliberate, it would lose its threatening appearance, and be insufficient to guard us against violence. When such is, and ought to be the nature of the passion, it is not wonderful to find it exerted irregularly and capriciously, as it sometimes is where the mischief is sudden and unforeseen. All the harm that can be done by the passion in that state is instantaneous; for the shortest delay sets all to rights; and circumstances are seldom so unlucky as to put it in the power of a passionate man to do much harm in an instant.

Social passions, like the selfish, sometimes drop their character, and become instinctive. It is not unusual to find anger and fear respecting others so excessive, as to operate blindly and impetuously, precisely as where they are selfish.

#### SECTION VII.

Passions excited by fiction—That things exist as we behold them is a branch of intuitive knowledge—Difference between ideal presence and reflective remembrance—Ideal presence, as distinguished from real presence, called a waking dream—As distinguished from reflective remembrance, it has no regard to time—In reading, truth and fiction equally excite emotions—History capable of exciting emotions by ideal presence only—Theatrical representations the most successful in raising emotions—Painting—Reading—The effect of describing a past event as present—Not to go backwards and forwards—Nothing improbable to be introduced in an epic poem—No machinery to be employed—The final cause of the excitement of our passions by fiction.

THE attentive reader will observe, that hitherto no fiction has been assigned as the cause of any passion or emotion; whether it be

\* Spectator, No. 439.

a being, action, or quality, that moves us, it is supposed to be really existing. This observation shows that we have not yet completed our task; because passions, as all the world know, are moved by fiction as well as by truth. In judging beforehand of man, so remarkably addicted to truth and reality, one should little dream that fiction can have any effect upon him; but man's intellectual faculties are not sufficiently perfect to dive far, even into his own nature. I shall take occasion afterward to show, that the power of fiction to generate passion is an admirable contrivance, subservient to excellent purposes: in the mean time, we must try to unfold the means that give fiction such influence over the mind.

That the objects of our external senses really exist in the way and manner we perceive, is a branch of intuitive knowledge: when I see a man walking, a tree growing, or cattle grazing, I cannot doubt that these objects are really what they appear to be: if I be a spectator of any transaction or event, I have a conviction of the real existence of the persons engaged, of their words, and of their actions. Nature determines us to rely on the veracity of our senses; for otherwise they could not, in any degree, answer their end—that of laying open things existing and passing around us.

By the power of memory, a thing formerly seen, may be recalled to the mind with different degrees of accuracy. We are commonly satisfied with a slight recollection of the capital circumstances; and, in such recollection, the thing is not figured as in our view, nor any image formed: we retain the consciousness of our present situation, and barely remember that formerly we saw that thing. But with respect to an interesting object or event that made a strong impression, I am not satisfied with a cursory review, but must dwell upon every circumstance. I am imperceptibly converted into a spectator, and perceive every particular passing in my presence, as when I was in reality a spectator. For example, I saw, yesterday, a beautiful woman in tears for the loss of an only child, and was greatly moved with her distress: not satisfied with a slight recollection or bare remembrance, I ponder upon the melancholy scene: conceiving myself to be in the place where I was an eye-witness, every circumstance appears to me as at first: I think I see the woman in tears, and hear her moans. Hence it may be justly said, that in a complete idea of memory there is no past nor future: a thing recalled to the mind with the accuracy I have been describing, is perceived as in our view, and, consequently, as existing at present. Past time makes part of an incomplete idea only: I remember or reflect, that some years ago I was at Oxford, and saw the first stone laid of the Radcliff library; and I remember that, at a still greater distance of time, I heard a debate in the House of Commons about a standing army.

Lamentable is the imperfection of language, almost in every particular that falls not under external sense. I am talking of a matter exceedingly clear in the perception, and yet I find no small difficulty to express it clearly in words; for it is not accurate to talk of incidents long past as passing in our sight, nor of hearing at present

what we really heard yesterday, or at a more distant time. And yet the want of proper words to describe ideal presence, and to distinguish it from real presence, makes this inaccuracy unavoidable. When I recall any thing to my mind in a manner so distinct as to form an idea or image of it as present, I have not words to describe that act, but that I perceive the thing as a spectator, and as existing in my presence; which means not that I am really a spectator, but only that I conceive myself to be a spectator, and have a perception of the object similar to what a real spectator has.

As many rules of criticism depend on ideal presence, the reader, it is hoped, will take some pains to form an exact notion of it, as distinguished, on the one hand, from real presence, and on the other, from a superficial or reflective remembrance. In contradistinction to real presence, ideal presence may properly be termed *a waking dream*; because, like a dream, it vanishes the moment we reflect upon our present situation: real presence, on the contrary, vouched by eye-sight, commands our belief, not only during the direct perception, but in reflecting afterward on the object. To distinguish ideal presence from reflective remembrance, I give the following illustration: when I think of an event as past, without forming any image, it is barely reflecting or remembering that I was an eye-witness: but when I recall the event so distinctly as to form a complete image of it, I perceive it as passing in my presence; and this perception is an act of intuition, into which reflection enters not, more than into an act of sight.

Though ideal presence is thus distinguished from real presence on the one side, and from reflective remembrance on the other, it is, however, variable without any precise limits; rising sometimes toward the former, and often sinking toward the latter. In a vigorous exertion of memory, ideal presence is extremely distinct. Thus, when a man, entirely occupied with some event that made a deep impression, forgets himself, he perceives every thing as passing before him, and has a consciousness of presence similar to that of a spectator; with no difference but that in the former the perception of presence is less firm and clear than in the latter. But such vigorous exertion of memory is rare: ideal presence is oftener faint, and the image so obscure as not to differ widely from reflective remembrance.

Hitherto I have spoken of an idea of memory. I proceed to consider the idea of a thing I never saw, raised in me by speech, by writing, or by painting. That idea, with respect to the present subject, is of the same nature with an idea of memory, being either complete or incomplete. A lively and accurate description of an important event, raises in me ideas no less distinct than if I had been originally an eye-witness: I am insensibly transformed into a spectator; and have an impression that every incident is passing in my presence. On the other hand, a slight or superficial narrative produces but a faint and incomplete idea, of which ideal presence makes no part. Past time is a circumstance that enters into this idea, as it does into an incomplete idea of memory: I believe that Scipio existed

about 2000 years ago, and that he overcame Hannibal in the famous battle of Zama. When I reflect so slightly upon that memorable event, I consider it as long past. But let it be spread out in a lively and beautiful description, I am insensibly transformed into a spectator: I perceive these two heroes in act to engage: I perceive them brandishing their swords, and cheering their troops; and in that manner I attend them through the battle, every incident of which appears to be passing in my sight.

I have had occasion to observe,\* that ideas, both of memory and of speech, produce emotions of the same kind with what are produced by an immediate view of the object: only fainter, in proportion as an idea is fainter than an original perception. The insight we now have, unfolds that mystery: ideal presence supplies the want of real presence; and in idea we perceive persons acting and suffering, precisely as in an original survey: if our sympathy be engaged by the latter, it must also, in some degree, be engaged by the former, especially if the distinctness of ideal presence approach to that of real presence. Hence the pleasure of a reverie, where a man, forgetting himself, is totally occupied with the ideas passing in his mind, the objects of which he conceives to be really existing in his presence. The power of language to raise emotions, depends entirely on the raising of such lively and distinct images as are here described: the reader's passions are never sensibly moved, till he is thrown into a kind of reverie; in which state, forgetting that he is reading, he conceives every incident as passing in his presence, precisely as if he were an eye-witness. A general or reflective remembrance cannot warm us into any emotion: it may be agreeable in some slight degree; but its ideas are too faint and obscure to raise any thing like an emotion; and were they ever so lively, they pass with too much precipitation to have that effect: our emotions are never instantaneous; even such as come the soonest to their height, have different periods of birth and increment; and to give opportunity for these different periods, it is necessary that the cause of every emotion be present to the mind a due time; for an emotion is not carried to its height by reiterated impressions only. We know that to be the case of emotions arising from objects of sight; a quick succession, even of the most beautiful objects, scarcely making any impression; and if this hold in the succession of original perceptions, how much more in the succession of ideas?

Though all this while I have been only describing what passes in the mind of every one, and of what every one must be conscious, it was necessary to enlarge upon the subject; because, however clear in the internal conception, it is far from being so when described in words. Ideal presence, though of general importance, has scarcely ever been touched by any writer; and however difficult the explication, it could not be avoided in accounting for the effects produced by fiction. Upon that point, the reader, I presume, has anticipated me: it already must have occurred to him, that if, in reading, ideal presence be the means by which our passions are moved, it makes no

\* Part I. sect. 1. of the present chapter.

difference whether the subject be a fable or a true history: when ideal presence is complete, we perceive every object as in our sight; and the mind, totally occupied with an interesting event, finds no leisure for reflection. This reasoning is confirmed by constant and universal experience. Let us take under consideration the meeting of Hector and Andromache, in the sixth book of the Iliad; or some of the passionate scenes in King Lear: these pictures of human life, when we are sufficiently engaged, give an impression of reality not less distinct than that given by Tacitus, in his description of the death of Otho: we never once reflect whether the story be true or feigned; reflection comes afterward, when we have the scene no longer before our eyes. This reasoning will appear in a still clearer light, by opposing ideal presence to ideas raised by a cursory narrative; which ideas being faint, obscure, and imperfect, leave a vacancy in the mind, which solicits reflection. And accordingly, a curt narrative of feigned incidents is never relished: any slight pleasure it affords, is more than counterbalanced by the disgust it inspires for want of truth.

To support the foregoing theory, I add what I reckon a decisive argument; which is, that even genuine history has no command over our passions but by ideal presence only; and consequently, that in this respect it stands upon the same footing with fable. To me it appears clear, that in neither can our sympathy hold firm against reflection: for if the reflection that a story is a pure fiction prevent our sympathy, so will equally the reflection that the persons described are no longer existing. What effect, for example, can the belief of the rape of Lucretia have to raise our sympathy, when she died above 2000 years ago, and has at present no painful feeling of the injury done her? The effect of history, in point of instruction, depends, in some measure, upon its veracity. But history cannot reach the heart, while we indulge any reflection upon the facts: such reflection, if it engage our belief, never fails, at the same time, to poison our pleasure, by convincing us that our sympathy for those who are dead and gone is absurd. And if reflection be laid aside, history stands upon the same footing with fable: what effect either may have to raise our sympathy, depends on the vivacity of the ideas they raise; and, with respect to that circumstance, fable is generally more successful than history.

Of all the means for making an impression of ideal presence, theatrical representation is the most powerful. That words, independent of action, have the same power in a less degree, every one of sensibility must have felt: a good tragedy will extort tears in private, though not so forcibly as upon the stage. That power belongs also to painting: a good historical picture makes a deeper impression than words can, though not equal to that of theatrical action. Painting seems to possess a middle place between reading and acting: in making an impression of ideal presence, it is not less superior to the former than inferior to the latter.

It must not, however, be thought, that our passions can be raised by painting, to such a height as by words: a picture is confined to a

single instant of time, and cannot take in a succession of incidents: its impression indeed is the deepest that can be made instantaneously; but seldom is a passion raised to any height in an instant, or by a single impression. It was observed above, that our passions, those especially of the sympathetic kind, require a succession of impressions; and for that reason, reading and acting have greatly the advantage, by reiterating impressions without end.

Upon the whole, it is by means of ideal presence that our passions are excited; and till words produce that charm, they avail nothing: even real events entitled to our belief, must be conceived present and passing in our sight, before they can move us. And this theory serves to explain several phenomena otherwise unaccountable. A misfortune happening to a stranger, makes a less impression than one happening to a man we know, even where we are no way interested in him: our acquaintance with this man, however slight, aids the conception of his suffering in our presence. For the same reason, we are little moved by any distant event; because we have more difficulty to conceive it present, than an event that happened in our neighborhood.

Every one is sensible, that describing a past event as present, has a fine effect in language: for what other reason than that it aids the conception of ideal presence? Take the following example.

And now with shouts the shocking armies clos'd,  
To lances lances, shields to shields oppos'd;  
Host against host the shadowy legions drew,  
The sounding darts, an iron tempest, flew;  
Victors and vanquish'd join promiscuous cries,  
Triumphing shouts and dying groans arise,  
With streaming blood the slipp'ry field is dy'd,  
And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.

In this passage we may observe how the writer, inflamed with the subject, insensibly advances from the past time to the present; led to that form of narration by conceiving every circumstance as passing in his own sight: which, at the same time, has a fine effect upon the reader, by presenting things to him as a spectator. But change from the past to the present requires some preparation, and is not sweet where there is no stop in the sense: witness the following passage.

Thy fate was next, O Phæstus! doom'd to feel  
The great Idomeneus' protended steel;  
Whom Borus sent (his son and only joy)  
From fruitful Tarne to the fields of Troy.  
The Cretan jav'lin reach'd him from afar,  
And pierc'd his shoulder as he mounts his car.  
*Iliad, v. 57.*

It is still worse to fall back to the past in the same period; for that is an anticlimax in description:

Through breaking ranks his furious course he bends,  
And at the goddess his broad lance extends;  
Through her bright veil the daring weapon drove,  
Th' ambrosial veil, which all the graces wove:  
Her snowy hand the razing steel profan'd,  
And the transparent skin with crimson stain'd. *Iliad, v. 415.*



Again, describing the shield of Jupiter :

Here all the terrors of grim War appear,  
Here rages Force, here tremble Flight and Fear,  
Here storm'd Contention, and here Fury frown'd,  
And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown'd.

*Iliad*, v. 914.

Nor is it pleasant to be carried backward and forward alternately in a rapid succession :

Then dy'd Scamandrius, expert in the chace,  
In woods and wilds to wound the savage race;  
Diana taught him all her sylvan arts,  
To bend the bow and aim unerring darts :  
But vainly here Diana's arts he tries,  
The fatal lance arrests him as he flies ;  
From Menelaus' arm the weapon sent,  
Through his broad back and heaving bosom went  
Down sinks the warrior with a thund'ring sound,  
His brazen armor rings against the ground.

*Iliad*, v. 65.

It is wonderful to observe, upon what slight foundations Nature erects some of her most solid and magnificent works. In appearance at least, what can be more slight than ideal presence ; and yet from it is derived that extensive influence which language has over the heart ; an influence which, more than any other means, strengthens the bond of society, and attracts individuals from their private system to perform acts of generosity and benevolence. Matters of fact, it is true, and truth in general, may be inculcated without taking advantage of ideal presence ; but without it, the finest speaker or writer would in vain attempt to move any passion : our sympathy would be confined to objects that are really present ; and language would lose entirely its signal power of making us sympathize with beings removed at the greatest distance of time as well as of place. Nor is the influence of language, by means of ideal presence, confined to the heart ; it reaches also the understanding, and contributes to belief. For when events are related in a lively manner, and every circumstance appears to be passing before us, we suffer not patiently the truth of the facts to be questioned. An historian, accordingly, who has a genius for narration, seldom fails to engage our belief. The same facts related in a manner cold and indistinct, are not suffered to pass without examination : a thing ill described is like an object seen at a distance, or through a mist ; we doubt whether it be a reality or a fiction. Cicero says, that to relate the manner in which an event passed, not only enlivens the story, but makes it appear more credible.\* For that reason, a poet who can warm and animate his reader, may employ bolder fictions than ought to be ventured by an inferior genius : the reader, once thoroughly engaged, is susceptible of the strongest impressions :

Veraque constituunt, quæ belle tangere possunt  
Aureis, et lepido quæ sunt fucata sonore.

*Lucretius*, lib. 1. l. 644.

————— And most believing true  
The silver sounds that charm th' enchanted ear.

\* *De Oratore*, lib. 2. sect. 81.

A masterly painting has the same effect. Le Brun is no small support to Quintus Curtius: and among the vulgar in Italy, the belief of scripture-history is, perhaps, founded as much upon the authority of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and other celebrated painters, as upon that of the sacred writers.\*

The foregoing theory must have fatigued the reader with much dry reasoning; but his labor will not be fruitless; because from that theory are derived many useful rules in criticism, which shall be mentioned in their proper places. One specimen shall be our present entertainment. Events that surprise by being unexpected, and yet are natural, enliven greatly an epic poem: but in such a poem, if it pretend to copy human manners and actions, no improbable incident ought to be admitted: that is, no incident contrary to the order and course of nature. A chain of imagined incidents, linked together according to the order of nature, finds easy admittance into the mind; and a lively narrative of such incidents occasions complete images, or, in other words, ideal presence: but our judgment revolts against an improbable incident; and, if we once begin to doubt of its reality, farewell relish and concern—an unhappy effect; for it will require more than an ordinary effort, to restore the waking dream, and to make the reader conceive, even the more probable incidents as passing in his presence.

I never was an admirer of machinery in an epic poem, and I now find my taste justified by reason; the foregoing argument concluding still more strongly against imaginary beings, than against improbable facts. Fictions of that nature may amuse by their novelty and singularity; but they never move the sympathetic passions, because they cannot impose on the mind any perception of reality. I appeal to the discerning reader, whether that observation be not applicable to the machinery of Tasso and of Voltaire: such machinery is not only, in itself, cold and uninteresting, but gives an air of fiction to the whole composition. A burlesque poem, such as the *Lutrin* or the *Dispensary*, may employ machinery with success; for these poems, though they assume the air of history, give entertainment chiefly by their pleasant and ludicrous pictures, to which machinery contributes. It is not the aim of such a poem, to raise our sympathy; and for that reason a strict imitation of nature is not required. A poem professedly ludicrous, may employ machinery to great advantage; and the more extravagant the better.

Having assigned the means by which fiction commands our passions, what only remains for accomplishing our present task, is to

\* At quæ Polycleto defuerunt, Phidiæ atque Alcameni dantur. Phidias tamen diis quam hominibus efficiendis melior artifex traditur: in ebore vero longe citra æmulum, vel si nihil nisi Minervam Athenis, aut Olympium in Elide Jovem fecisset, cujus pulchritudo adjecisse aliquid etiam receptæ religioni videtur; adeo majestas operis Deum æquavit.

But Phidias and Alcamenes possess those qualities which were denied to Polycletus. Phidias, however, is said to be a better artificer of *gods* than of *men*—in ivory, indeed, he is far beyond his rival, even if he had made nothing except his Minerva at Athens, or his Olympian Jove in Elis, whose beauty seems to have even added something to the received religion, so much has the majesty of the work represented a god.

Quintilian, lib. 12. cap. 10. § 1.



assign the final cause. I have already mentioned, that fiction, by means of language, has the command of our sympathy for the good of others. By the same means, our sympathy may also be raised for our own good. In the fourth section of the present chapter, it is observed, that examples, both of virtue and of vice, raise virtuous emotions; which becoming stronger by exercise, tend to make us virtuous by habit, as well as by principle. I now farther observe, that examples confined to real events are not so frequent as without other means to produce a habit of virtue: if they be, they are not recorded by historians. It therefore shows great wisdom, to form us in such a manner, as to be susceptible of the same improvement from fable that we receive from genuine history. By that contrivance, examples to improve us in virtue may be multiplied without end: no other sort of discipline contributes more to make virtue habitual, and no other sort is so agreeable in the application. I add another final cause with thorough satisfaction; because it shows, that the Author of our nature is not less kindly provident for the happiness of his creatures, than for the regularity of their conduct. The power that fiction has over the mind affords an endless variety of refined amusements always at hand to employ a vacant hour: such amusements are a fine resource in solitude; and, by cheering and sweetening the mind, contribute mightily to social happiness.

## PART II.

### EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS AS PLEASANT AND PAINFUL, AGREEABLE AND DISAGREEABLE. MODIFICATIONS OF THESE QUALITIES.

The difference between agreeable and pleasant, and painful and disagreeable—Agreeable and disagreeable, qualities of the object—Pleasant and painful, qualities of our emotions—A passion or emotion becomes either agreeable or disagreeable, when made the object of thought—Emotions pleasant or painful according to their cause—Nature and desire, the rules for determining the agreeableness or disagreeableness of emotions—Agreeable emotions follow good actions, and disagreeable emotions, bad—A passion becoming the object of thought, may produce a passion or emotion—Instances of pleasant passions that are disagreeable, and painful passions that are agreeable—Modifications of these passions are without limit—The delicacy of discriminating between them—Of pleasant emotions, some are gross and others refined—Of painful passions, some are voluntary, and others involuntary—Ridicule considered a gross pleasure.

It will naturally occur at first, that a discourse upon the passions ought to commence with explaining the qualities now mentioned; but upon trial, I found that this explanation could not be made distinctly, till the difference should first be ascertained between an emotion and a passion, and their causes unfolded.

Great obscurity may be observed among writers with regard to the present point: particularly no care is taken to distinguish agreeable from pleasant, disagreeable from painful; or rather, these terms are deemed synonymous. This is an error not at all venial in the science of ethics; as instances can and shall be given, of painful

passions that are agreeable, and of pleasant passions that are disagreeable. These terms, it is true, are used indifferently in familiar conversation, and in compositions for amusement; but more accuracy is required from those who profess to explain the passions. In writing upon the critical art, I would avoid every refinement that may seem more curious than useful; but the proper meaning of the terms under consideration must be ascertained, in order to understand the passions, and some of their effects that are intimately connected with criticism.

I shall endeavor to explain these terms by familiar examples. Viewing a fine garden, I perceive it to be beautiful or agreeable; and I consider the beauty or agreeableness as belonging to the object, or as one of its qualities. When I turn my attention from the garden to what passes in my mind, I am conscious of a pleasant emotion, of which the garden is the cause: the pleasure here is felt, as a quality, not of the garden, but of the emotion produced by it. I give an opposite example. A rotten carcass is disagreeable, and raises in the spectator a painful emotion: the disagreeableness is a quality of the object; the pain is a quality of the emotion produced by it. In a word, agreeable and disagreeable are qualities of the objects we *perceive*; pleasant and painful are qualities of the emotions we *feel*: the former qualities are perceived as adhering to objects; the latter are felt as existing within us.

But a passion or emotion, beside being felt, is frequently made an object of thought or reflection: we examine it; we inquire into its nature, its cause, and its effects. In that view, like other objects, it is either agreeable or disagreeable. Hence clearly appear the different significations of the terms under consideration, as applied to passion: when a passion is termed *pleasant* or *painful*, we refer to the actual feeling; when termed *agreeable* or *disagreeable*, we refer to it as an object of thought or reflection; a passion is pleasant or painful to the person in whom it exists; it is agreeable or disagreeable to the person who makes it a subject of contemplation.

In the description of emotions and passions, these terms do not always coincide: to make which evident, we must endeavor to ascertain, first, what passions and emotions are pleasant, and what painful; and next, what are agreeable, and what disagreeable. With respect to both, there are general rules, which, if I can trust to induction, admit not a single exception. The nature of an emotion or passion, as pleasant or painful, depends entirely on its cause: the emotion produced by an agreeable object is invariably pleasant; and the emotion produced by a disagreeable object is invariably painful.\* Thus, a lofty oak, a generous action, a valuable discovery in art or science, are agreeable objects that invariably produce pleasant emotions. A stinking puddle, a treacherous action, an irregular, ill-contrived edifice, being disagreeable objects, produce painful emotions. Selfish passions are pleasant; for they arise from self, an agreeable object or cause. A social passion directed upon an agreeable object is always pleasant; directed upon an object in distress it is painful.†

\* See Part 7. of this chapter.

† Ibid.

Lastly, all dissocial passions, such as envy, resentment, malice, being caused by disagreeable objects, cannot fail to be painful.

A general rule for the agreeableness or disagreeableness of emotions and passions is a more difficult enterprise: it must, however, be attempted. We have a sense of a common nature in every species of animals, particularly in our own; and we have a conviction that this common nature is *right*, or *perfect*, and that individuals *ought* to be made conformable to it.\* To every faculty, to every passion, and to every bodily member, is assigned a proper office and a due proportion: if one limb be longer than the other, or be disproportioned to the whole, it is wrong and disagreeable: if a passion deviate from the common nature, by being too strong or too weak, it is also wrong and disagreeable: but as far as conformable to common nature, every emotion and every passion is perceived by us to be right, and as it ought to be; and upon that account it must appear agreeable. That this holds true in pleasant emotions and passions, will readily be admitted: but the painful are no less natural than the other; and therefore ought not to be an exception. Thus the painful emotion raised by a monstrous birth or brutal action, is no less agreeable upon reflection, than the pleasant emotion raised by a flowing river or a lofty dome; and the painful passions of grief and pity are agreeable, and applauded by all the world.

Another rule more simple and direct for ascertaining the agreeableness or disagreeableness of a passion as opposed to an emotion, is derived from the desire that accompanies it. If the desire be to perform a right action in order to produce a good effect, the passion is agreeable: If the desire be, to do a wrong action in order to produce an ill effect, the passion is disagreeable. Thus, passions as well as actions are governed by the moral sense. These rules by the wisdom of Providence coincide: a passion that is conformable to our common nature must tend to good; and a passion that deviates from our common nature must tend to ill.

This deduction may be carried a great way farther: but to avoid intricacy and obscurity, I make but one other step. A passion which, as aforesaid, becomes an object of thought to a spectator, may have the effect to produce a passion or emotion in him; for it is natural, that a social being should be affected with the passions of others. Passions or emotions thus generated, submit, in common with others, to the general law above mentioned, namely, that an agreeable object produces a pleasant emotion, and a disagreeable object a painful emotion. Thus the passion of gratitude, being to a spectator an agreeable object, produces in him the pleasant passion of love to the grateful person: and malice being to a spectator a disagreeable object, produces in him the painful passion of hatred to the malicious person.

We are now prepared for examples of pleasant passions that are disagreeable, and of painful passions that are agreeable. Self-love, as long as confined within just bounds, is a passion both pleasant and agreeable: in excess it is disagreeable, though it continues to

\* See this doctrine fully explained, chap. 25. *Standard of Taste*.

be still pleasant. Our appetites are precisely in the same condition. Resentment, on the other hand, is, in every stage of the passion, painful; but it is not disagreeable unless in excess. Pity is always painful, yet always agreeable. Vanity, on the contrary, is always pleasant, yet always disagreeable. But however distinct these qualities are, they coincide, I acknowledge, in one class of passions: all vicious passions tending to the hurt of others, are equally painful and disagreeable.

The foregoing qualities of pleasant and painful, may be sufficient for ordinary subjects: but with respect to the science of criticism, it is necessary, that we also be made acquainted with the several modifications of these qualities; with the modifications, at least, that make the greatest figure. Even at first view one is sensible, that the pleasure or pain of one passion differs from that of another: how distant the pleasure of revenge gratified from that of love? so distant, as that we cannot without reluctance admit them to be any way related. That the same quality of pleasure should be so differently modified in different passions, will not be surprising, when we reflect on the boundless variety of agreeable sounds, tastes, and smells, daily perceived. Our discernment reaches differences still more minute, in objects even of the same sense: we have no difficulty to distinguish different sweets, different sour, and different bitters; honey is sweet, so is sugar, and yet the one never is mistaken for the other: our sense of smelling is sufficiently acute, to distinguish varieties in sweet-smelling flowers without end. With respect to passions and emotions, their differences as to pleasant and painful have no limits; though we want acuteness of feeling for the more delicate modifications. There is here an analogy between our internal and external senses: the latter are sufficiently acute for all the useful purposes of life, and so are the former. Some persons, indeed, Nature's favorites, have a wonderful acuteness of sense, which to them unfolds many a delightful scene, totally hid from vulgar eyes. But if such refined pleasure be confined to a small number, it is, however, wisely ordered that others are not sensible of the defect; nor detracts it from their happiness that others secretly are more happy. With relation to the fine arts only, that qualification seems essential; and there it is termed *delicacy of taste*.

Should an author of such a taste attempt to describe all those varieties in pleasant and painful emotions which he himself feels, he would soon meet an invincible obstacle in the poverty of language: a people must be thoroughly refined, before they invent words for expressing the more delicate feelings; and for that reason, no known tongue has hitherto reached that perfection. We must, therefore, rest satisfied with an explanation of the more obvious modifications.

In forming a comparison between pleasant passions of different kinds, we conceive some of them to be *gross*, some refined. Those pleasures of external sense that are felt as at the organ of sense, are conceived to be corporeal, or gross:\* the pleasure of the eye and

\* See the Introduction.

the ear are felt to be internal; and for that reason are conceived to be more pure and refined.

The social affections are conceived by all to be more refined than the selfish. Sympathy and humanity are universally esteemed the finest temper of mind; and for that reason, the prevalence of the social affections in the progress of society, is held to be a refinement in our nature. A savage knows little of social affection, and therefore is not qualified to compare selfish and social pleasure; but a man, after acquiring a high relish for the latter, loses not thereby a taste for the former: he is qualified to judge, and he will give preference to social pleasures, as more sweet and refined. In fact they maintain that character, not only in the direct feeling, but also when we make them the subject of reflection: the social passions are far more agreeable than the selfish, and rise much higher in our esteem.

There are differences not less remarkable among the painful passions. Some are voluntary, some involuntary: the pain of the gout is an example of the latter; grief, of the former, which in some cases is so voluntary as to reject all consolation. One pain softens the temper; pity is an instance: one tends to render us savage and cruel, which is the case of revenge. I value myself upon sympathy: I hate and despise myself for envy.

Social affections have an advantage over the selfish, not only with respect to pleasure, as above explained, but also with respect to pain. The pain of an affront, the pain of want, the pain of disappointment, and a thousand other selfish pains, are cruciating and tormenting, and tend to a habit of peevishness and discontent. Social pains have a very different tendency: the pain of sympathy, for example, is not only voluntary, but softens my temper, and raises me in my own esteem.

Refined manners, and polite behavior, must not be deemed altogether artificial: men who, inured to the sweets of society, cultivate humanity, find an elegant pleasure in preferring others, and making them happy, of which the proud, the selfish, scarcely have a conception.

Ridicule, which chiefly arises from pride, a selfish passion, is at best but a gross pleasure: a people, it is true, must have emerged out of barbarity before they can have a taste for ridicule; but it is too rough an entertainment for the polished and refined. Cicero discovers in Plautus a happy talent for ridicule, and a peculiar delicacy of wit: but Horace, who made a figure in the court of Augustus, where taste was considerably purified, declares against the lowness and roughness of that author's raillery. Ridicule is banished from France, and is losing ground in England.

Other modifications of pleasant passions will be occasionally mentioned hereafter. Particularly the modifications of *high* and *low* are to be handled in the chapter of grandeur and sublimity; and the modifications of *dignified* and *mean*, in the chapter of dignity and grace.

## PART III.

## INTERRUPTED EXISTENCE OF EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.—THEIR GROWTH AND DECAY.

An emotion cannot exist without the cause be present, or by means of an idea—Growth and decay of emotions and passions—Some emotions produced in their utmost perfection, and of short continuance; others of long duration—A passion produced in perfection when nature requires it to be sudden—A passion founded on an original propensity, soon comes to maturity—The growth of love or hatred slow or quick, according to circumstances—The tendency of passions to excess—The growth of some passions depends on occasional circumstances—The continuance and decay of passions—Passions sudden in their growth, suddenly decay—A passion founded on an original propensity, subsists for ever—A passion having obtained its ultimate end, subsides—Particular and general ends of passions—Particular ends accomplished by a single act—General ends admit of repeated acts—Difference between an original propensity, and one founded on custom—The former never eradicated; the latter may be.

WERE it the nature of an emotion to continue, like color and figure, in its present state till varied by some operating cause, the condition of man would be deplorable: it is ordered wisely, that emotions should more resemble another attribute of matter, namely motion, which requires the constant exertion of an operating cause, and ceases when the cause is withdrawn. An emotion may subsist while its cause is present; and when its cause is removed, may subsist by means of an idea, though in a fainter manner: but the moment another thought breaks in and engrosses the mind, the emotion is gone, and is no longer felt; if it return with its cause, or an idea of its cause, it again vanishes with them when other thoughts crowd in. The reason is, that an emotion or passion is connected with the perception or idea of its cause, so intimately as not to have any independent existence: a strong passion, it is true, has a mighty influence to detain its cause in the mind; but not so as to detain it for ever, because a succession of perceptions or ideas is unavoidable.\* Farther, even while a passion subsists, it seldom continues long in the same tone, but is successively vigorous and faint: the vigor of a passion depends on the impression made by its cause; and a cause makes its deepest impression, when, happening to be the single interesting object, it attracts our whole attention:† its impression is slighter when our attention is divided between it and other objects; and at that time the passion is fainter in proportion.

When emotions and passions are felt thus by intervals, and have not a continued existence, it may be thought a nice problem to determine when they are the same, and when different. In a strict philosophic view, every single impression made, even by the same object, is distinguishable from what have gone before, and from what succeed: neither is an emotion raised by an idea the same with what is raised by a sight of the object. But such accuracy not being found in common apprehension, is not necessary in common

\* See this point explained afterwards, chap. 9.

† See the Appendix, containing definitions and explanation of terms, Sect. 33



language: the emotions raised by a fine landscape in its successive appearances are not distinguishable from each other, nor even from those raised by successive ideas of the object; all of them being held to be the same: a passion also is always reckoned the same as long as it is fixed upon the same object; and thus love and hatred are said to continue the same for life. Nay, so loose are we in that way of thinking, that many passions are reckoned the same, even after a change of object; which is the case of all passions that proceed from some peculiar propensity: envy, for example, is considered to be the same passion, not only while it is directed to the same person, but even where it comprehends many persons at once: pride and malice are examples of the same. So much was necessary to be said upon the identity of a passion and emotion, in order to prepare for examining their growth and decay.

The growth and decay of passions and emotions, traced through all their mazes, is a subject too extensive for an undertaking like the present: I pretend only to give a cursory view of it, such as may be necessary for the purposes of criticism. Some emotions are produced in their utmost perfection, and have a very short endurance: which is the case of surprise, of wonder, and sometimes of terror. Emotions raised by inanimate objects, trees, rivers, buildings, pictures, arrive at perfection almost instantaneously; and they have a long endurance, a second view producing nearly the same pleasure as the first. Love, hatred, and some other passions, swell gradually to a certain pitch; after which they decay gradually. Envy, malice, pride, scarcely ever decay. Some passions, such as gratitude and revenge, are often exhausted by a single act of gratification: other passions, such as pride, malice, envy, love, hatred, are not so exhausted; but having a long continuance, demand frequent gratification.

To handle every single passion and emotion with a view to these differences, would be an endless work: we must be satisfied at present with some general views. And with respect to emotions, which are quiescent, because not productive of desire, their growth and decay are easily explained: an emotion caused by an inanimate object, cannot naturally take longer time to arrive at maturity, than is necessary for a leisurely survey: such emotion also must continue long stationary, without any sensible decay; a second or third view of the object being nearly as agreeable as the first: this is the case of an emotion produced by a fine prospect, an impetuous river, or a towering hill. While a man remains the same, such objects ought to have the same effect upon him. Familiarity, however, has an influence here, as it has every where: frequency of view, after short intervals especially, weans the mind gradually from the object, which at last loses all relish: the noblest object in the material world, a clear and serene sky, is quite disregarded, unless perhaps after a course of bad weather. An emotion raised by human virtues, qualities, or actions, may, by reiterated views of the object, swell imperceptibly till it becomes so vigorous as to generate desire: in that condition it must be handled as a passion.

As to passion, I observe, first, that when nature requires a passion

to be sudden, it is commonly produced in perfection; which is the case of fear and of anger. Wonder and surprise are always produced in perfection: reiterated impressions made by their cause, exhaust these passions instead of inflaming them. This will be explained hereafter.\*

In the next place, when a passion has for its foundation an original propensity peculiar to some men, it generally comes soon to maturity: the propensity, upon presenting a proper object, is immediately enlivened into a passion; which is the case of pride, of envy, and of malice.

In the third place, the growth of love and of hatred is slow or quick according to circumstances: the good qualities of a person raise in me a pleasant emotion; which, by reiterated views, is swelled into a passion involving desire of that person's happiness: this desire being freely indulged, works gradually a change internally, and at last produces in me a settled habit of affection for that person, now my friend. Affection thus produced operates precisely like an original propensity; for to enliven it into a passion, no more is required than the real or ideal presence of the object. The habit of aversion or of hatred is brought on in the same manner. And here I must observe by the way, that love and hatred signify, commonly, affection and aversion, not passion. The bulk of our passions are indeed affection or aversion, inflamed into a passion by different circumstances: the affection I bear to my son, is inflamed into the passion of fear when he is in danger; becomes hope when he has a prospect of good fortune; becomes admiration when he performs a laudable action; and shame when he commits any wrong: aversion becomes fear when there is a prospect of good fortune to my enemy; becomes hope when he is in danger; becomes joy when he is in distress; and sorrow when a laudable action is performed by him.

Fourthly, passions generally have a tendency to excess, occasioned by the following means. The mind affected by any passion, is not in a proper state for distinct perception, nor for cool reflection: it has always a strong bias to the object of an agreeable passion, and a bias no less strong against the object of a disagreeable passion. The object of love, for example, however indifferent to others, is to the lover's conviction a paragon; and of hatred, is vice itself without alloy. What less can such delusion operate, than to swell the passion beyond what it was at first? for if seeing or conversing with a fine woman, has had the effect to carry me from indifference to love; how much stronger must her influence be, when now, to my conviction, she is an angel? and hatred as well as other passions must run the same course. Thus between a passion and its object there is a natural operation, resembling action and reaction in physics: a passion acting upon its object, magnifies it greatly in appearance; and this magnified object reacting upon the passion, swells and inflames it mightily.

Fifthly, the growth of some passion depends often on occasional circumstances: obstacles to gratification, for example, never fail to



augment and inflame a passion; because a constant endeavor to remove an obstacle, preserves the object of the passion ever in view, which swells the passion by impressions frequently reiterated. Thus the restraint of conscience, when an obstacle to love, agitates the mind and inflames the passion :

Quod licet, ingratum est: quod non licet, acrius urit.  
Si nunquam Danaën habuisset aenea turris,  
Non casset Danaë de Jove facta parens.  
*Ovid, Amor. l. 2.*

Gross easy love does, like gross diet, pall,  
In squeamy stomachs honey turns to gall,  
Had Danaë not been kept in brazen towers,  
Jove had not thought her worth his golden showers.

At the same time, the mind, distressed with the obstacles, becomes impatient for gratification, and consequently more desirous of it. Shakspeare expresses this observation finely :

All impediments in fancy's course,  
Are motives of more fancy.

We need no better example than a lover who has many rivals. Even the caprices of a mistress have the effect to inflame love; these occasioning uncertainty of success, tend naturally to make the anxious lover overvalue the happiness of fruition.

So much upon the growth of passions: their continuance and decay come next under consideration. And, first, it is a general law of nature, that things sudden in their growth, are equally sudden in their decay. This is commonly the case of anger. And, with respect to wonder and surprise, which also suddenly decay, another reason concurs, that their causes are of short duration: novelty soon degenerates into familiarity; and the unexpectedness of an object is soon sunk in the pleasure that the object affords. Fear, which is a passion of greater importance as tending to self-preservation, is often instantaneous; and yet is of equal duration with its cause: nay, it frequently subsists after the cause is removed.

In the next place, a passion founded on a peculiar propensity, subsists generally for ever; which is the case of pride, envy, and malice: objects are never wanting to inflame the propensity into a passion.

Thirdly, it may be laid down as a general law of nature, that every passion ceases upon attaining its ultimate end. To explain that law, we must distinguish between a particular and a general end. I call that a particular end which may be accomplished by a single act: a general end, on the contrary, admits acts without number: because it cannot be said, that a general end is ever fully accomplished, while the object of the passion subsists. Gratitude and revenge are examples of the first kind: the ends they aim at may be accomplished by a single act; and, when that act is performed, the passions are necessarily at an end. Love and hatred are examples of the other kind; desire of doing good or of doing mischief to an individual, is a general end, which admits acts without number

and which seldom is fully accomplished: therefore these passions have frequently the same duration that their objects have.

Lastly, it will afford us another general view, to consider the difference between an original propensity, and affection or aversion produced by custom. The former adheres too closely to the constitution ever to be eradicated; and for that reason, the passions to which it gives birth, continue during life with no remarkable diminution. The latter, which owe their birth and increment to time, owe their decay to the same cause: affection and aversion decay gradually as they grow; and accordingly hatred as well as love are extinguished by long absence. Affection decays more gradually between persons, who, living together, have daily occasion to testify mutually their good-will and kindness: and, when affection is decayed, habit supplies its place; for it makes these persons necessary to each other, by the pain of separation.\* Affection to children has a long endurance, longer perhaps than any other affection: its growth keeps pace with that of its objects: they display new beauties and qualifications daily, to feed and augment the affection. But whenever the affection becomes stationary, it must begin to decay; with a slow pace, indeed, in proportion to its increment. In short, man with respect to this life is a temporary being: he grows, becomes stationary, decays; and so must all his powers and passions.

## PART IV.

### COEXISTENT EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.

Concordant sounds—An emotion raised by an object of sight, and its qualities, similar to this—Emotions, similar and dissimilar—Similar emotions produce the same tone of mind—Dissimilar, produce different tones—Perfectly similar emotions readily unite—Internal effects of emotions and passions—Represented by addition in number—By harmony of sounds—Directly as the resemblance of the emotions, and inversely as the connection of the causes—The effect when both are united—The effects of dissimilar emotions—The opposite to the former, and distress the mind when the causes are similar—Opposite emotions never unite—They exist by succession—The stronger emotions overcome the weaker—Music—Music resolved into harmony and melody—The difference between vocal and instrumental music—Passions the cause of the external effects of music—Two external passions with the same tendency, if similar, have a double effect—Two passions with opposite tendencies, may proceed from the same cause—Difference of aim prevents the union of two passions, when the objects are different—Means offered to gratify the passions when the objects are different.

For a thorough knowledge of the human passions and emotions, it is not sufficient that they be examined singly and separately: as a plurality of them are sometimes felt at the same instant, the manner of their coexistence, and the effects thereby produced, ought also to be examined. This subject is extensive; and it will be difficult to trace all the laws that govern its endless variety of cases: if such an undertaking can be brought to perfection, it must be by degrees. The following hints may suffice for a first attempt.

We begin with emotions raised by different sounds, as the simplest

\* See Chap. 14.

case. Two sounds that mix, and, as it were, incorporate before they reach the ear, are said to be concordant. That each of the two sounds, even after their union, produces an emotion of its own, must be admitted: but these emotions, like the sounds that produce them, mix so intimately, as to be rather one complex emotion than two emotions in conjunction. Two sounds that refuse incorporation or mixture, are said to be discordant: and when heard at the same instant, the emotions produced by them are unpleasant in conjunction, however pleasant separately.

Similar to the emotion raised by mixed sounds is the emotion raised by an object of sight with its several qualities: a tree, for example, with its qualities of color, figure, size, &c. is perceived to be one object; and the emotion it produces is rather one complex emotion than different emotions combined.

With respect to coexistent emotions produced by different objects of sight, it must be observed, that however intimately connected such objects may be, there cannot be a concordance among them like what is perceived in some sounds. Different objects of sight, meaning objects that can exist each of them independent of the others, never mix nor incorporate in the act of vision: each object is perceived as it exists, separately from others; and each raises an emotion different from that raised by the other. And the same holds in all the causes of emotion or passion that can exist independent of each other, sounds only excepted.

To explain the manner in which such emotions exist, similar emotions must be distinguished from those that are dissimilar. Two emotions are said to be similar, when they tend, each of them, to produce the same tone of mind: cheerful emotions, however different their causes may be, are similar: and so are those which are melancholy. Dissimilar emotions are easily explained by their opposition to what are similar: pride and humility, gayety and gloominess, are dissimilar emotions.

Emotions perfectly similar, readily combine and unite,\* so as, in a manner, to become one complex emotion; witness the emotions produced by a number of flowers in a parterre, or of trees in a wood. Emotions that are opposite, or extremely dissimilar, never combine or unite: the mind cannot simultaneously take on opposite tones: it cannot at the same instant be both joyful and sad, angry and satisfied, proud and humble: dissimilar emotions may succeed each other with rapidity, but they cannot exist simultaneously.

Between these two extremes, emotions unite more or less, in proportion to the degree of their resemblance, and the degree in which their causes are connected. Thus the emotions produced by a fine landscape and the singing of birds, being similar in a considerable degree, readily unite, though their causes are little connected. And

\* It is easier to conceive the manner of coexistence of similar emotions, than to describe it. They cannot be said to mix or incorporate, like concordant sounds: their union is rather of agreement or concord; and therefore I have chosen the words in the text, not as sufficient to express clearly the manner of their coexistence, but only as less liable to exception than any other I can find.

the same happens where the causes are intimately connected, though the emotions, themselves, have little resemblance to each other; 'an example of which is a mistress in distress, whose beauty gives pleasure, and her distress pain: these two emotions, proceeding from different views of the object, have very little resemblance to each other; and yet so intimately connected are their causes, as to force them into a sort of complex emotion, partly pleasant, partly painful. This clearly explains some expressions common in poetry; *a sweet distress, a pleasant pain.*

It was necessary to describe, with some accuracy, in what manner similar and dissimilar emotions coexist in the mind, in order to explain their different effects, both internal and external. This subject, though obscure, is capable to be set in a clear light; and it merits attention, not only for its extensive use in criticism, but for the nobler purpose of deciphering many intricacies in the actions of men. Beginning with internal effects, I discover two, clearly distinguishable from each other, both of them produced by pleasant emotions that are similar; of which, the one may be represented by addition in numbers, the other by harmony in sounds. Two pleasant emotions that are similar, readily unite when they are coexistent; and the pleasure felt in the union, is the sum of the two pleasures: the same emotions in succession, are far from making the same figure; because the mind at no instant of the succession, is conscious of more than a single emotion. This doctrine may aptly be illustrate' by a landscape comprehending hills, valleys, plains, rivers, trees, &c.: the emotions produced by these several objects, being similar in a high degree, as falling in easily and sweetly with the same tone of mind, are in conjunction extremely pleasant. This multiplied effect is felt from objects even of different senses; as where a landscape is conjoined with the music of birds and odor of flowers; and results partly from the resemblance of the emotions and partly from the connection of their causes: whence it follows, that the effect must be the greatest, where the causes are intimately connected and the emotions perfectly similar. The same rule is obviously applicable to painful emotions that are similar and coexistent.

The other pleasure arising from pleasant emotions similar and coexistent, cannot be better explained than by the foregoing example of a landscape, where the sight, hearing, and smelling, are employed: beside the accumulated pleasure above mentioned, of so many different similar emotions, a pleasure of a different kind is felt from the concord of these emotions. As that pleasure resembles greatly the pleasure of concordant sounds, it may be termed the *harmony of emotions*. This harmony is felt in the different emotions occasioned by the visible objects; but it is felt still more sensibly in the emotions occasioned by the objects of different senses; as where the emotions of the eye are combined with those of the ear. The former pleasure comes under the rule of addition: this comes under a different rule. It is directly in proportion to the degree of resemblance between the emotions, and inversely in proportion to the degree of connection

between the causes: to feel this pleasure in perfection, the resemblance between the emotions cannot be too strong, nor the connection between their causes too slight. The former condition is self-evident; and the reason of the latter is, that the pleasure of harmony is felt from various similar emotions, distinct from each other, and yet sweetly combining in the mind; which excludes causes intimately connected, for the emotions produced by them are forced into one complex emotion. This pleasure of concord or harmony, which is the result of pleasing emotions, and cannot have place with respect to those that are painful, will be farther illustrated, when the emotions produced by the sound of words and their meaning are taken under consideration.\*

The pleasure of concord from conjoined emotions, is felt, even where the emotions are not perfectly similar. Though love be a pleasant passion, yet by its softness and tenderness it resembles, in a considerable degree, the painful passion of pity or of grief; and for that reason, love accords better with these passions than with what are gay and sprightly. I give the following example from Catullus where the concord between love and grief has a fine effect, even in so slight a subject as the death of a sparrow.

Lugete, ô Veneres, Cupidinesque,  
Et quantum est hominum venustiorum  
Passer mortuus est meæ puellæ,  
Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat.  
Nam mellitus erat, suamque norat  
Ipsam tam bene, quam puella matrem:  
Nec sese a gremio illius movebat;  
Sed circumsiliens modo huc, modo illuc,  
Ad solam dominam usque pipilabat.  
Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum,  
Illuc, unde negant redire quemquam.  
At vobis male sit, malæ tenebræ  
Orci, quæ omnia bella devoratis;  
Tam bellum mihi passerem abstulistis.  
O factum male, ô miselle passer.  
Tua nunc opera, meæ puellæ  
Flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.

Each Love, each Venus, mourn with me!  
Mourn, every son of gallantry!  
The Sparrow, my own nymph's delight,  
The joy and apple of her sight;  
The honey-bird, the darling dies,  
To Lesbia dearer than her eyes.  
As the fair-one knew her mother,  
So he knew her from another.  
With his gentle lady wrestling;  
In her snowy bosom nestling;  
With a flutter, and a bound,  
Quiv'ring round her and around  
Chirping, twitt'ring, ever near,  
Notes meant only for her ear.  
Now he skims the shadowy way,  
Whence none return to cheerful day.  
Beshrew the shades! that thus devour  
All that's pretty in an hour.

The pretty Sparrow, thus, is dead  
 The tiny fugitive is fled.  
 Deed of spite ! poor bird !—ah ! see,  
 For thy dear sake, alas ! for me !—  
 My nymph with brimful eyes appears,  
 Red from the flushing of her tears.

Next as to the effects of dissimilar emotions, which we may guess will be opposite to what are above described. Dissimilar coexistent emotions, as said above, never fail to distress the mind by the difference of their tones ; from which situation a feeling of harmony never can proceed ; and this holds whether the causes be connected or not. But it holds more remarkably where the causes are connected ; for in that case the dissimilar emotions being forced into an unnatural union, produce an actual feeling of discord. In the next place, if we would estimate the force of dissimilar emotions coexistent, we must distinguish between their causes as connected or unconnected : and in order to compute their force in the former case, subtraction must be used instead of addition ; which will be evident from what follows. Dissimilar emotions forced into union by the connection of their causes, are felt obscurely and imperfectly ; for each tends to vary the tone of mind that is suited to the other ; and the mind thus distracted between two objects, is at no instant in a condition to receive a deep impression from either. Dissimilar emotions proceeding from unconnected causes, are in a very different condition ; for as there is nothing to force them into union, they are never felt but in succession ; by which means, each has an opportunity to make a complete impression.

This curious theory requires to be illustrated by examples. In reading the description of the dismal waste, book I. of *Paradise Lost*, we are sensible of a confused feeling, arising from dissimilar emotions forced into union ; to wit, the beauty of the description, and the horror of the object described.

Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,  
 The seat of desolation, void of light,  
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
 Casts pale and dreadful ?

And with respect to this and many similar passages in *Paradise Lost*, we are sensible, that the emotions being obscured by each other, make neither of them that figure they would make separately. For the same reason, ascending smoke in a calm morning, which inspires stillness and tranquillity, is improper in a picture full of violent action. A parterre, partly ornamented, partly in disorder, produces a mixt feeling of the same sort. Two great armies in act to engage, mix the dissimilar emotions of grandeur and of terror.

Sembra d'alberi densi alta foresta  
 L'un campo, e l'altro ; di tant' aste abbonda.  
 Son tesi gli archi, e son le lance in resta :  
 Vibransi i dardi, e rotasi ogni fionda.  
 Ogni cavallo in guerra anco s'appresta,  
 Gli odii, e 'l furor del suo signor seconda :  
 Raspa, batte, nitrisce, e si raggira,  
 Gonfia le nari ; e fumo, e fuoco spira.

Bello in sì bella vista anco è l' orrore  
 E di mezzo la tema esce il diletto.  
 Ne men le trombe orribili e canore,  
 Sono a gli orecchi, lieto e fero oggetto.  
 Pur il campo fedel, benchè minore,  
 Par di suon più mirabile, e d'aspeto;  
 E canta in più guerriero e chiaro carme  
 Ogni sua tromba, e maggior luce han l'arme.

*Gerusalemme Liberata, Cant. 20. st. 29, 30.*

Of drie topt oakes, they seem'd two forrests thicke:  
 So did each hoste with speares and pikes abound,  
 Bent were their bowes, in rests their lannces stickes,  
 Their hands shooke swords, their slings held cobles round:  
 Each steed to runne was readie, prest and quicke  
 At his commander's spurre, his hand, his sound;  
 He chafes, he stampes, careers, and turnes about  
 He fomes, snorts, neighs, and fire and smoake breaths out.  
 Horrour itselfe in that faire-sight seem'd faire,  
 And pleasure flew amid sad dreed and feare:  
 The trumpets shrill, that thundred in the aire,  
 Were musicke milde and sweete to everie eare:  
 The faithfule campe, though lesse, yet seem'd more raire  
 In that strange noise, more warlike, shrill and cleare,  
 In notes more sweete, the Pagan trumpets iarre,  
 These sung, their armours shined, these glistred farre.

*Fairfax.*

Suppose a virtuous man has drawn on himself a great misfortune, by a fault incident to human nature, and therefore venial: the remorse he feels aggravates his distress, and consequently raises our pity to a high pitch: we at the same time blame the man; and the indignation raised by the fault he has committed, is dissimilar to pity: these two passions, however, proceeding from the same object, are forced into a sort of union; but the indignation is so slight, as scarcely to be felt in the mixture with pity. Subjects of this kind are of all the fittest for tragedy; but of that afterward.\*

Opposite emotions are so dissimilar as not to admit any sort of union, even where they proceed from causes the most intimately connected. Love to a mistress, and resentment for her infidelity, are of that nature: they cannot exist otherwise than in succession, which by the connection of their causes is commonly rapid; and these emotions will govern alternately, till one of them obtain the ascendancy, or both be spent. A succession opens to me by the death of a worthy man, who was my friend as well as my kinsman: when I think of my friend I am grieved; but the succession gives me joy. These two causes are intimately connected; for the succession is the direct consequence of my friend's death: the emotions however being opposite, do not mix; they prevail alternately, perhaps for a course of time, till grief for my friend's death be banished by the pleasures of opulence. A virtuous man suffering unjustly, is an example of the same kind. I pity him, and have great indignation at the author of the wrong. These emotions proceed from causes nearly connected; but being directed to different objects, they are not forced into union: their opposition preserves them distinct; and accordingly they are found to prevail alternately.



I proceed to examples of dissimilar emotions arising from unconnected causes. Good and bad news of equal importance arriving at the same instant from different quarters, produce opposite emotions, the discordance of which is not felt, because they are not forced into union: they govern alternately, commonly in a quick succession, till their force be spent:

*Shylock.* How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

*Tubal.* I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

*Shy.* Why there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Francfort? the curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels! I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear; O would she were hears'd at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin. No news of them; why, so! and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge, nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but o' my shedding.

*Tub.* Yes, other men have ill luck too; Antonio, as I heard in Genoa ——

*Shy.* What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

*Tub.* Hath an argosie cast away, coming from Tripolis.

*Shy.* I thank God, I thank God; is it true? is it true?

*Tub.* I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

*Shy.* I thank thee, good Tubal; good news, good news, ha, ha; where, in Genoa?

*Tub.* Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night, fourscore ducats.

*Shy.* Thou stick'st a dagger in me; I shall never see my gold again; fourscore ducats at a sitting, fourscore ducats!

*Tub.* There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot chuse but break.

*Shy.* I am glad of it, I'll plague him, I'll torture him; I am glad of it.

*Tub.* One of them shew'd me a ring, that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

*Shy.* Out upon her! thou torturest me. Tubal; it was my Turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor; I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

*Tub.* But Antonio is certainly undone.

*Shy.* Nay, that's true, that's very true; go see me an officer, bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our-synagogue, Tubal.

*Merchant of Venice, Act III. Sc. I.*

In the same manner, good news arriving to a man laboring under distress, occasions a vibration in his mind from the one to the other:

*Osmyn.* By Heav'n thou'st rous'd me from my lethargy.  
The spirit which was deaf to my own wrongs,  
And the loud cries of my dead father's blood,  
Deaf to revenge—nay, which refus'd to hear  
The piercing sighs and murmurs of my love  
Yet unenjoy'd; what not Almeira could  
Revive, or raise, my people's voice has waken'd.  
O my Antonio, I am all on fire,  
My soul is up in arms, ready to charge  
And bear amidst the foe with conqu'ring troops.  
I hear em' call to lead 'em on to liberty,  
To victory; their shouts and clamours rend  
My ears, and reach the heav'ns: where is the king?  
Where is Alphonso? ha! where! where indeed?  
O I could tear and burst the strings of life,  
To break these chains. Off, off, ye stains of royalty  
Off slavery! O curse, that I alone



Can beat and flutter in my cage, when I  
Would soar, and stoop at victory beneath!

*Mourning Bride, Act III. Sc. 2.*

If the emotions be unequal in force, the stronger, after a conflict, will extinguish the weaker. Thus the loss of a house by fire, or of a sum of money by bankruptcy, will make no figure in opposition to the birth of a long-expected son, who is to inherit an opulent fortune. after some slight vibrations, the mind settles in joy, and the loss is forgotten.

The foregoing observations will be found of great use in the fine arts. Many practical rules are derived from them, which shall afterward be mentioned; but for instant gratification in part, the reader will accept the following specimen, being an application of these observations to music. It must be premised, that no disagreeable combination of sounds is entitled to the name of music: for all music is resolvable into melody and harmony, which imply agreeableness in their very conception.\* Secondly, the agreeableness of vocal music differs from that of instrumental: the former, being intended to accompany words, ought to be expressive of the sentiment that they convey; but the latter having no connection with words, may be agreeable without relation to any sentiment: harmony, properly so called, though delightful when in perfection, has no relation to sentiment; and we often find melody without the least tincture of it.† Thirdly, in vocal music, the intimate connection of sense and sound rejects dissimilar emotions, those especially that are opposite. Similar emotions produced by the sense and the sound, go naturally into union; and at the same time are concordant or harmonious: but dissimilar emotions, forced into union by these causes intimately connected, obscure each other, and are also unpleasant by discordance.

These premises make it easy to determine what sort of poetical compositions are fitted for music. In general, as music in all its various tones ought to be agreeable, it never can be concordant with any composition in language expressing a disagreeable passion, or describing a disagreeable object: for here the emotions raised by the sense and by the sound, are not only dissimilar but opposite; and such emotions forced into union, always produce an unpleasant mixture. Music, accordingly, is a very improper companion for sentiments of malice, cruelty, envy, peevishness, or of any other dissocial passion; witness among a thousand King John's speech in Shakespeare, soliciting Hubert to murder Prince Arthur, which, even in the most cursory view, will appear incompatible with any sort of

\* Sounds may be so contrived as to produce horror, and several other painful feelings, which in a tragedy, or in an opera, may be introduced with advantage to accompany the representation of a dissocial or disagreeable passion. But such sounds must in themselves be disagreeable; and upon that account cannot be dignified with the name of music.

† It is beyond the power of music to raise a passion or a sentiment: but it is in the power of music to raise emotions similar to what are raised by sentiments expressed in words pronounced with propriety and grace; and such music may justly be termed *sentimental*.

music. Music is a companion no less improper for the description of any disagreeable object, such as that of Polyphemus in the third book of the *Æneid*, or that of Sin in the second book of *Paradise Lost*: the horror of the object described and the pleasure of the music, would be highly discordant.

With regard to vocal music, there is an additional reason against associating it with disagreeable passions. The external signs of such passions are painful; the looks and gestures to the eye, and the tone of pronunciation to the ear: such tones, therefore, can never be expressed musically, for music must be pleasant, or it is not music.

On the other hand, music associates finely with poems that tend to inspire pleasant emotions: music for example in a cheerful tone, is perfectly concordant with every motion in the same tone; and hence our taste for airs expressive of mirth and jollity. Sympathetic joy associates finely with cheerful music; and sympathetic pain no less finely with music that is tender and melancholy. All the different emotions of love, namely, tenderness, concern, anxiety, pain of absence, hope, fear, accord delightfully with music: and accordingly, a person in love, even when unkindly treated, is soothed by music; for the tenderness of love still prevailing, accords with a melancholy strain. This is finely exemplified by Shakspeare in the fourth act of *Othello*, where Desdemona calls for a song expressive of her distress. Wonderful is the delicacy of that writer's taste, which fails him not even in the most refined emotions of human nature. Melancholy music is suited to slight grief, which requires or admits consolation: but deep grief, which refuses all consolation, rejects, for that reason, even melancholy music.

Where the same person is both the actor and the singer, as in an opera, there is a separate reason why music should not be associated with the sentiments of any disagreeable passion, nor the description of any disagreeable object; which is, that such association is altogether unnatural. The pain, for example, that a man feels who is agitated with malice or unjust revenge, disqualifies him for relishing music, or any thing that is pleasing; and, therefore, to represent such a man, contrary to nature, expressing his sentiments in a song, cannot be agreeable to any audience of taste.

For a different reason, music is improper for accompanying pleasant emotions of the more important kind; because these totally engross the mind, and leave no place for music, nor for any sort of amusement: in a perilous enterprise to dethrone a tyrant, music would be impertinent, even where hope prevails, and the prospect of success is great. Alexander attacking the Indian town, and mounting the wall, had certainly no impulse to exert his prowess in a song.

It is true, that not the least regard is paid to these rules, either in the French or Italian opera: and the attachment we have to operas, may, at first, be considered as an argument against the foregoing doctrine. But the general taste for operas is no argument: in these compositions the passions are so imperfectly expressed, as to leave the mind free for relishing music of any sort indifferently; and it cannot be disguised, that the pleasure of an opera is derived, chiefly,

from the music, and scarcely at all from the sentiments: a happy concordance of the emotions raised by the song and by the music, is extremely rare; and I venture to affirm, that there is no example of it, unless where the emotion raised by the former is agreeable as well as that raised by the latter.\*

The subject we have run through appears not a little entertaining. It is extremely curious to observe, in many instances, a plurality of causes producing, in conjunction, a great pleasure: in other instances, no less frequent, no conjunction, but each cause acting in opposition. To enter bluntly upon a subject of such intricacy, might gravel an acute philosopher; but taking matters in a train, the intricacy vanishes.

Next in order, according to the method proposed, come external effects; which lead us to passions as the causes of external effects. Two coexistent passions that have the same tendency, must be similar: they accordingly readily unite, and in conjunction have double force. This is verified by experience; from which we learn, that the mind receives not impulses alternately from such passions, but one strong impulse from the whole in conjunction; and, indeed, it is not easy to conceive what should bar the union of passions that have all of them the same tendency.

Two passions having opposite tendencies, may proceed from the same cause considered in different views. Thus a mistress may at once be the cause both of love and of resentment: her beauty inflames the passion of love; her cruelty or inconstancy causes resentment. When two such passions coexist in the same breast, the opposition of their aim prevents any sort of union; and accordingly, they are not felt otherwise than in succession: the consequence of which must be, either that the passions will balance each other and prevent external action, or that one of them will prevail and accomplish its end. Guarini, in his *Pastor Fido*, describes beautifully the struggle between love and resentment directed to the same object:

*Corisca.* Chi vide mai, chi mai udi più strana  
E più folle, e più fera, e più importuna  
Passione amorosa? amore, ed odio  
Con sì mirabil tempre in un cor misti,  
Che l'un par l'altro (e non so ben dir come)  
E si strugge, e s'avanza, e nasce, e more.  
S' i' miro alle bellezze di Mirtillo  
Dal piè leggiadro al grazioso volto,  
Il vago portamento, il bel sembiante,  
Gli atti, i costumi, e le parole, e 'l guardo;  
M'assale Amore con sì possente foco  
Ch' i' ardo tutta, e par, ch' ogn' altro affetto  
Da questo sol sia superato, e vinto:  
Ma se poi penso all' ostinato amore,

\* A censure of the same kind is pleasantly applied to the French ballettes by a celebrated writer: "Si le Prince est joyeux, on prend part à sa joye, et l'on danse: s'il est triste, on veut l'égayer, et l'on danse. Mais il y a bien d'autres sujets de danses; les plus graves actions de la vie se font en dansant. Les prêtres dansent, les soldats dansent, les dieux dansent, les diables dansent, on danse jusques dans les enterremens, et tout danse à propos de tout."

Ch' ei porta ad altra donna, e che per lei  
 Di me non cura, e sprezza (il vo' pur dire)  
 La mia famosa, e da mill' alme, e milla,  
 Inchinata beltà, bramata grazia ;  
 L' odio così, così l' aborro, e schivo,  
 Che impossibil mi par, ch' unqua per lui  
 Mi s' accendesse al cor fiamma amorosa.  
 Tallor meco ragiono : o s' io potessi  
 Gioir del mio dol' dolcissimo Mirtillo,  
 Sicche fosse mio tutto, e ch' altra mai  
 Posseder no 'l potesse, o più d' ogn' altra  
 Beata, e felicissima Corisca !  
 Ed in quel punto in me sorge un talento  
 Verso di lui sì dolce, e sì gentile,  
 Che di seguirlo, e di pregarlo ancora,  
 E di scoprirgli il cor prendo consiglio.  
 Che più ? così mi stimola il desio,  
 Che se potessi allor l' adorerei.  
 Dall' altra parte i' mi risento, e dico,  
 Un ritroso ? uno schifo ? un che non degna ?  
 Un, che può d' altra donna esser amante ?  
 Un, ch' ardisce mirarmi, e non m' adora ?  
 E dal mio volto si difende in guisa,  
 Che per amor non more ? ed io, che lui  
 Dovrei veder, come molti altri i' veggio  
 Supplice, e lagrimoso a' piedi miei,  
 Supplice, e lagrimoso a piedi suoi  
 Sosterro di cadere ? ah non fia mai.  
 Ed in questo pensier tant' ira accoglio  
 Contra di lui, contra di me, che volsi  
 A seguirlo il pensier, gli occhi a mirarlo.  
 Che 'l nome di Mirtillo, e l' amor mio  
 Odio più che la morte ; e lui vorrei  
 Veder il più dolente il più infelice  
 Pastor, che viva ; e se potessi allora,  
 Con le mie proprie man l' anciderei.  
 Così sdegno, desire, odio, ed amore  
 Mi fanno guerra, ed io, che stata sono  
 Sempre fin qui, di mille cor la fiamma,  
 Di mill' alme il tormento, ardo, e languisco :  
 E provo nel mio mal le pene altrui.\*

*Pastor Fido, Act I. Sc. 3.*

Ovid paints in lively colors the vibration of mind between two opposite passions directed to the same object. Althea had two brothers much beloved, who were unjustly put to death by her son Meleager in a fit of passion: she was strongly impelled to revenge; but the criminal was her own son. This ought to have withheld her hand; but the story is more interesting, by the violence of the struggle between resentment and maternal love:

Dena Dedm templis nato victore ferebat ;  
 Cum videt extinctos fratres Althæa referri.  
 Quæ plangore dato, mœstis ululatibus urbem  
 Implet ; et auratas mutavit vestibus atris.  
 At ainel est auctor necis editus ; excidit omnis  
 Luctus : et a lacrymis in pœnæ versus amorem est.  
 Stipes erat, quem, cum partus enixa jaceret  
 Thestias, in flammam triplices posuere sorores ;

\* The editor did not think it necessary to introduce a translation of this passage, as the same principle is contained in the following illustration.

Staminaque impresso fatalia pollice nentes,  
 Tempora, dixerunt, eadem lignoque, tibiue,  
 O modo nate, damus. Quo postquam carmine dicto  
 Excessere Deæ; flagrantem mater ab igne  
 Eripuit torrem: sparsitque liquentibus undia.  
 Ille diu fuerat penetralibus abditus imis;  
 Servatusque tuos, juvenis, servaverat annos.  
 Protulit hunc genitrix, tædasque in fragmina poni  
 Imperat; et positos inimicos admovet ignes.  
 Tum conata quater flammis imponere ramum,  
 Cæpta quater tenuit. Pugnat materque, sororque,  
 Et diversa trahunt unum duo nomina pectus.  
 Sæpe metu sceleris pallabant ora futuri:  
 Sæpe suum fervens oculis dabat ira ruborem,  
 Et modo nescio quid similis crudele minanti  
 Vultus erat; modo quem misereri credere posses:  
 Cumque ferus lacrymas animi siccaverat ardor,  
 Inveniebantur lacrymæ tamen. Utque carina,  
 Quam ventus, ventoque rapit contrarius aestus,  
 Vim geminam sentit, paretque incerta duobus:  
 Thestias haud alitur dubiis affectibus errat,  
 Inque vices ponit, positamque resuscitat iram.  
 Incipit esse tamen melior germana parente;  
 Et, consanguineas ut sanguine leniat umbras,  
 Impietate pia est. Nam postquam pestifer ignis  
 Convaluit; Rogus iste cremet mea viscera, dixit.  
 Utque manu dirâ lignum fatale tenebat;  
 Ante sepulchrales infelix adstitit aras.  
 Pœnarumque Deæ triplicis furialibus, inquit,  
 Eumenides, sacris vultus advertite vestros.  
 Ulciscor, facioque nefas. Mors morte pianda est;  
 In scelus addendum scelus est, in funera funus:  
 Per coacervatos pereat domus impia luctus.  
 An felix Oeneus nato victore fruatur?  
 Thestius orbis erit? melius lugebitis ambo.  
 Vos modo fraterni mânes, animæque recentes,  
 Officium sentite meum; magnoque paratas  
 Accipite inferias, uteri mala pignora nostri.  
 Hei mihi! quo rapior? fratres ignoscite matri.  
 Deficiunt ad cæpta manus. Meruisse fatemur  
 Illum, cur pereat: mortis mihi displicet auctor.  
 Ergo impune feret; vivusque, et victor, et ipso  
 Successu tumidus regnum Calydonis habebit?  
 Vos cinis exiguus, gelidæque jacebitis umbræ?  
 Haud equidem patiar. Pereat sceleratus; et ille  
 Spemque patris, regnique trahat, patriæque ruinam.  
 Mens ubi materna est? ubi sunt pia jura parentum?  
 Et, quos sustinui, bis mensum quinque labores?  
 O utinam primis arsisses ignibus infans:  
 Idque ego passa forem! vixisti munere nostro;  
 Nunc merito moriêre tuo. Cape præmia facti;  
 Bisque datam, primum partu, mox stipite raptò,  
 Redde animam; vel me fraternis adde sepulchris.  
 Et cupio, et nequeo. Quid agam? modo vulnera fratrum  
 Ante oculos mihi sunt, et tantæ cædis imago;  
 Nunc animum pietas, maternaque nomina fragunt.  
 Me miseram! male vincetis? sed vincite, fratres;  
 Dummodo, quæ dederò vobis solatia, vosque  
 Ipsa sequar, dixit: dextraque aversa trementi  
 Funereum torrem medios conjecit in ignes.  
 Aut dedit, aut visus gemitus est ille dedisse  
 Stipes; et invitis correptus ab ignibus arsit.

Pleased with the first, unknown the second news;  
Althæa to the temples pays their dues  
For her son's conquest; when at length appear  
Her grisly brethren stretched upon the bier;  
Pale at the sudden sight she changed her cheer,  
And with her cheer, her robes: but hearing tell  
The cause, the manner, and by whom they fell,  
'Twas grief no more, or grief and rage were one  
Within her soul; at last, 'twas rage alone;  
Which bursting upwards in succession, dries  
The tears, that stood consid'ring in her eyes.  
There lay a log unlighted on the hearth,  
When she was lab'ring in the throes of birth,  
For the unborn chief; the fatal sisters came,  
And raised it up, and toss'd it on the flame;  
Then on the rock a scanty measure place  
Of vital flax, and turned the wheel apace;  
And turning sung; To this red brand and thee,  
O new-born babe, we give an equal destiny:—  
So vanished out of view; The frightened dame  
Sprang hasty from her bed, and quenched the flame:  
The log, in secret locked, she kept with care;  
And that, while thus preserved, preserved her heir.  
This brand she now produced; and first she strows  
The hearth with heaps of chips, and after blows:  
Thrice heaved her hand, and heaved, she thrice repressed:  
The sister, and the mother long contest,  
Two doubtful titles, in one tender breast.  
And now her eyes and cheeks with fury glow,  
Now pale her cheeks, her eyes with pity flow:  
Now lowering looks presage approaching storms,  
And now prevailing love her face reforms;  
Resolved, she doubts again; the tears she dried  
With burning rage, are by new tears supplied;  
And as a ship, which winds and waves assail,  
Now with the current drives, now with the gale,  
Both opposite, and neither long prevail;  
She feels a double force, by turns obeys  
The imperious tempest, and the impetuous seas:  
So fares Althæa's mind; she first relents  
With pity; of that pity then repents.  
Sister, and mother, long the scales divide;  
But the beam nodded on the sister's side:  
Sometimes she softly sighed, then roared aloud:  
But sighs were stifled in the cries of blood.  
The pious, impious wretch at length decreed,  
To please her brothers' ghost, her son should bleed:  
And when the funeral flames began to rise,  
Receive, she said, a sister's sacrifice;  
A mother's bowels burn: high in her hand,  
Thus while she spoke, she held the fatal brand;  
Then thrice before the kindled pile she bowed,  
And the three Furies thrice invoked aloud:  
Come, come, revenging sisters; come, and view  
A sister paying her dead brothers' due:  
A crime I punish, and a crime commit,  
But blood for blood and death for death is fit:  
Great crimes must be with greater crimes repaid,  
And second funerals on the former laid.  
Let the whole household in one ruin fall,  
And may Diana's curse o'ertake us all!  
Shall fate to happy Cæneus still allow  
One son, while Thesius stands deprived of two?

Better three lost, than one unpunished go.  
 Take, then, dear ghost, while yet admitted new  
 In hell, you wait my duty, take your due:  
 A costly offering on your tomb is laid,  
 When with my blood the price of yours is paid.—  
 Ah! whither am I hurried? Ah! forgive,  
 Ye shades, and let your sister's issue live:  
 A mother cannot give him death; though he  
 Deserves it, he deserves it not from me:—  
 Then shall the unpunished wretch insult the slain,  
 Triumphant live, nor only live, but reign,  
 While you, thin shades, the sport of winds are tossed  
 O'er dreary plains, or tread the burning coast.  
 I cannot, cannot bear; 'tis past, 'tis done;  
 Perish this impious, this detested son;  
 Perish his sire, and perish I with all;  
 And let the house's heir, and the hop'd kingdom fall!  
 Where is the mother fled, her pious love,  
 And where the pains with which ten months I strove?  
 Ah! hadst thou died, my son, in infant years,  
 Thy little hearse had been bedewed with tears.—  
 Thou livedst by me; to me thy breath resign;  
 Mine is the merit, the demerit thine.  
 Thy life by double title I require;  
 Once given at birth, and once preserved from fire;  
 One murder pay, or add one murder more,  
 And me to them who fell by thee restore.—  
 I would, but cannot: my son's image stands  
 Before my sight; and now their angry hands  
 My brothers hold, and vengeance *these* exact,  
 This pleads compassion, and repents the fact.—  
 He pleads in vain, and I pronounce his doom:  
 My brothers, though unjustly, shall o'ercome:  
 But having paid their injured ghosts their due,  
 My son requires my death, and mine shall his pursue.  
 At this, for the last time, she lifts her hand,  
 Averts her eyes, and, half unwilling, drops the brand.  
 The brand, amid the flaming fuel thrown,  
 Or drew, or seemed to draw, a dying groan:  
 The fires themselves but faintly lick'd their prey,  
 Then loath'd their impious food, and would have shrunk away.

In cases of this kind, one circumstance always augments the fluctuation: after balancing between two actions, a resolution to prefer one of them is an inchoated gratification of the prevailing passion, which moderates it in some degree; and that circumstance tends to give a superiority to the opposite passion: another circumstance also concurs, that this opposite passion has, by restraint, acquired in the interim some additional force.

Love and jealousy connected by a common object, occupy the mind alternately: when the object is considered as beautiful, love prevails; when considered as possibly unfaithful, jealousy prevails. A situation of that kind affords great scope for fluctuation of passion; which is painted to the life by several masterly hands in words as well as in colors. Shakspeare handles the same subject, but in a manner uncommon, and peculiar to himself: in Othello's soliloquy before putting his wife to death, love and jealousy are represented, each exerting its whole force, but without any struggle: Othello was naturally inflexible; and the tenderest love could not divert him



from a purpose he approved as right, not even so. a moment. but every thing consistent with such a character is done. to reconcile the two opposite passions; he is resolved to put her to death, but he will not shed her blood, nor so much as ruffle her skin:

*Othello.* It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;—  
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!  
 It is the cause———Yet I'll not shed her blood,  
 Nor scar that whiter skin of her's than snow,  
 And smooth as monumental alabaster. [*Lays down the sword.*  
 Yet she must die; else she'll betray more men.  
 Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!—  
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
 I can again thy former light restore,  
 Should I repent: but once put out thy light,  
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
 I know not where is that Promethean heat  
 That can thy life relumine.—[*Sets down the taper.*  
 When I have pluck'd thy rose,  
 I cannot give it vital growth again;  
 It needs must wither.—I'll smell thee on the tree. [*Kissing her.*  
 O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
 Justice to break her sword!—One more; one more;  
 Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
 And love thee after.—One more, that's the last;  
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal; I must weep,  
 But they are cruel tears! this sorrow's heavenly;  
 It strikes where it doth love.— *Othello, Act V. Sc. 6.*

In Otway's *Orphan*, we have an illustrious example of the address employed to gratify opposite passions directed to the same object. Castalio and Polydore, brothers and rivals, had sworn mutual confidence: Castalio broke his faith by a private marriage; which unwarily betrayed Polydore into a dismal deed, that of polluting his brother's bed. Thus he had injured his brother, and was injured by him: justice prompted him to make full atonement by his own death; resentment against his brother, required a full atonement to be made to himself. In coexistent passions so contradictory, one of them commonly prevails after a struggle: but here happily an expedient occurred to Polydore for gratifying both; which was, that he should provoke his brother to put him to death. Polydore's crime, in his own opinion, merited that punishment; and justice was satisfied when he fell by the hand of the man he had injured: he wanted, at the same time, to punish his brother for breach of faith; and he could not punish more effectually than by betraying his brother to be his executioner.

If difference of aim prevent the union of two passions, though they have the same object, much more will it prevent their union, when their objects are also different: in both cases there is a fluctuation; but in the latter the fluctuation is slower than in the former. A beautiful situation of that kind is exhibited in the *Cid* of Corneille. Don Diegue, an old soldier worn out with age, having received a mortal affront from the Count, father to Chimene, employs his son Don Rodrigue, Chimene's lover, to demand satisfaction. This situation occasions in the breast of Don Rodrigue a cruel struggle between love and honor, one of which must be sacrificed. The scene is



fluely conducted, chiefly by making love, in some degree, take part with honor, Don Rodrigue reflecting, that if he lost his honor he could not deserve his mistress: honor triumphs; and the Count provoked to a single combat, falls by the hand of Don Rodrigue.

This produces another beautiful situation respecting Chimene, which making part of the same story, is placed here, though it properly belongs to the foregoing head. It became the duty of that lady to demand justice against her lover, for whose preservation, in other circumstances, she would have cheerfully sacrificed her own life. The struggle between these opposite passions directed to the same object is finely expressed in the third scene of the third act:

*Elvire.* Il vous prive d'un père, et vous l'aimez encore !

*Chimène.* C'est peu de dire aimer, Elvire, je l'adore ;

Ma passion s'oppose à mon ressentiment,  
Dedans mon ennemi je trouve mon amant ;  
Et je sens qu'en dépit de toute ma colère,  
Rodrigue dans mon cœur combat encor mon père.  
Il l'attaque, il le presse, il cède, il se défend,  
Tantôt fort, tantôt foible, et tantôt triomphant ;  
Mais en ce dur combat de colère et de flamme,  
Il déchire mon cœur sans partager mon ame  
Et quoique mon amour ait sur moi du pouvoir,  
Je ne consulte point pour suivre mon devoir.  
Je cours sans balancer où mon honneur m'oblige ;  
Rodrigue m'est bien cher, son intérêt m'afflige,  
Mon cœur prend son parti ; mais malgré son effort,  
Jesais que je suis, et que mon père est mort.

Not less when the objects are different than when the same, are means sometimes afforded to gratify both passions; and such means are greedily embraced. In Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, Edward and Gildippe, husband and wife, are introduced fighting gallantly against the Saracens. Gildippe receives a mortal wound by the hand of Soliman: Edward inflamed with revenge, as well as concern for Gildippe, is agitated between the two different objects. The poet\* describes him endeavoring to gratify both at once, applying his right hand against Soliman, the object of his resentment, and his left hand to support his wife, the object of his love.

## PART V.

### INFLUENCE OF PASSION WITH RESPECT TO OUR PERCEPTIONS, OPINIONS, AND BELIEF.

The influence of passion upon our perceptions, opinions, and belief—Tranquillity or sedateness, the proper state of mind for accurate perception and cool deliberation—Agreeable passions prepossess us in favor of their objects; disagreeable do not—A strong propensity in our nature to justify our passions and actions—Arguments for a favorite opinion always at hand—The mind delighted and impressed by agreeable arguments, but not by disagreeable—Examples: Gratitude—Envy—Grief—Resentment—Anger—Good news—Bad news—Improbable events—Future events—Prosperity—Affliction.

CONSIDERING how intimately our perceptions, passions, and actions, are mutually connected, it would be wonderful if they should

\* Canto 20. st. 97.

have no mutual influence. That our actions are too much influenced by passion, is a known truth; but it is not less certain, though not so well known, that passion has also an influence upon our perceptions, opinions, and belief. For example, the opinions we form of men and things, are generally directed by affection: an advice given by a man of figure, has great weight; the same advice from one in a low condition is despised or neglected: a man of courage under-rates danger; and to the indolent the slightest obstacle appears unsurmountable.

This doctrine is of great use in logic; and of still greater use in criticism, by serving to explain several principles of the fine arts that will be unfolded in the course of this work. A few general observations shall, at present, suffice, leaving the subject to be prosecuted more particularly afterward when occasion offers.

There is no truth more universally known, than that tranquillity and sedateness are the proper state of mind for accurate perception and cool deliberation; and for that reason, we never regard the opinion, even of the wisest man, when we discover prejudice or passion behind the curtain. Passion, as observed above,\* has such influence over us, as to give a false light to all its objects. Agreeable passions prepossess the mind in favor of their objects, and disagreeable passions, no less against their objects: a woman is all perfection in her lover's opinion, while, in the eye of a rival beauty, she is awkward and disagreeable: when the passion of love is gone, beauty vanishes with it,—nothing is left of that genteel motion, that sprightly conversation, those numberless graces, which formerly, in the lover's opinion, charmed all hearts. To a zealot every one of his own sect is a saint, while the most upright of a different sect are, to him, children of perdition: the talent of speaking in a friend, is more regarded than prudent conduct in any other. Nor will this surprise one acquainted with the world. Our opinions, the result, frequently, of various and complicated views, are commonly so slight and wavering, as readily to be susceptible of a bias from passion.

With that natural bias another circumstance concurs, to give passion an undue influence on our opinions and belief; and that is a strong tendency in our nature to justify our passions as well as our actions, not to others only, but even to ourselves. That tendency is peculiarly remarkable with respect to disagreeable passions: by its influence, objects are magnified or lessened, circumstances supplied or suppressed, every thing colored and disguised, to answer the end of justification. Hence the foundation of self-deceit, where a man imposes upon himself innocently, and even without suspicion of a bias.

There are subordinate means that contribute to pervert the judgment, and to make us form opinions contrary to truth; of which I shall mention two. First, it was formerly observed,† that though ideas seldom start up in the mind without connection, yet that ideas suited to the present tone of mind are readily suggested by any slight connection: the arguments for a favorite opinion are always at hand, while we often search in vain for those that cross our inclination

\* Page 68.

† Chap. I.

Second; the mind, taking delight in agreeable circumstances or arguments, is deeply impressed with them; while those that are disagreeable are hurried over so as scarcely to make any impression: the same argument, by being relished or not relished, weighs so differently, as in truth to make conviction depend more on passion than on reasoning. This observation is fully justified by experience: to confine myself to a single instance; the numberless absurd religious tenets that at different times have pestered the world, would be altogether unaccountable but for that irregular bias of passion.

We proceed to a more pleasant task, which is, to illustrate the foregoing observations by proper examples. Gratitude, when warm, is often exerted upon the children of the benefactor; especially where he is removed out of reach by death or absence.\* The passion in this case being exerted for the sake of the benefactor, requires no peculiar excellence in his children: but the practice of doing good to these children produces affection for them, which never fails to advance them in our esteem. By such means, strong connections of affection are often formed among individuals, upon the slight foundation now mentioned.

Envy is a passion, which, being altogether unjustifiable, can only be excused by disguising it under some plausible name. At the same time, no passion is more eager than envy, to give its object a disagreeable appearance: it magnifies every bad quality, and fixes on the most humbling circumstances:

*Cassius.* I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life; but for my single self,  
I had as lief not be, as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.  
I was born free as Cæsar, so were you;  
We both have fed as well; and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.  
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,  
The troubled Tyber chafing with his shores,  
Cæsar says to me, Dar'st thou, Cassius, now  
Leap in with me into this angry flood,  
And swim to yonder point?—Upon the word,  
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in,  
And bid him follow; so indeed he did.  
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it,  
With lusty sinews; throwing it aside,  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.  
But ere we could arrive the point propos'd,  
Cæsar cry'd, Help me, Cassius, or I sink.  
I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,  
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder  
The old Anchises bear; so from the waves of Tyber  
Did I the tired Cæsar: and this man  
Is now become a god, and Cassius is  
A wretched creature; and must bend his body,  
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.  
He had a fever when he was in Spain,  
And when the fit was on him, I did mark  
How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake;

\* See part 1. sect. 1. of the present chapter.

His coward lips did from their color fly,  
 And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world,  
 Did lose its lustre; I did hear him groan;  
 Ay, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans  
 Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,  
 Alas! it cry'd—Give me some drink, Titinius,—  
 As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me,  
 A man of such a feeble temper should  
 So get a start of the majestic world,  
 And bear the palm alone. *Julius Caesar, Act I. Sc. 3.*

Glo'ster, inflamed with resentment against his son Edgar, could even force himself into a momentary conviction that they were not related:

O strange fasten'd villain!  
 Would he deny his letter?—I never got him.  
*King Lear, Act II. Sc. 3.*

When by great sensibility of heart, or other means, grief becomes immoderate, the mind, in order to justify itself, is prone to magnify the cause: and if the real cause admit not of being magnified, the mind seeks a cause for its grief in imagined future events:

*Busy.* Madam, your Majesty is much too sad:  
 You promis'd, when you parted with the King,  
 To lay aside self-harming heaviness,  
 And entertain a cheerful disposition.  
*Queen.* To please the King, I did; to please myself,  
 I cannot do it. Yet I know no cause  
 Why I should welcome such a guest as grief:  
 Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest  
 As my sweet Richard: yet again, methinks,  
 Some unborn sorrow, ripe in Fortune's womb,  
 Is coming tow'rd me; and my inward soul  
 With something trembles, yet at nothing grieves,  
 More than with parting from my lord the King.  
*Richard II. Act II. Sc. 5.*

Resentment at first is vented on the relations of the offender, in order to punish him: but as resentment, when so outrageous, is contrary to conscience, the mind, to justify its passion, is disposed to paint these relations in the blackest colors; and it comes, at last, to be convinced, that they ought to be punished for their own demerits.

Anger raised by an accidental stroke upon a tender part of the body, is sometimes vented upon the undesigning cause. But as the passion in that case is absurd, and as there can be no solid gratification in punishing the innocent, the mind, prone to justify as well as to gratify its passion, deludes itself into a conviction that the action is voluntary. The conviction, however, is but momentary: the first reflection shows it to be erroneous; and the passion vanishes almost instantaneously with the conviction. But anger, the most violent of all passions, has still greater influence: it sometimes forces the mind to personify a stock or a stone, if it happen to occasion bodily pain, and even to believe it a voluntary agent, in order to be a proper object of resentment. And that we have really a momentary conviction of its being a voluntary agent, must be evident from considering, that, without such conviction, the passion can neither

be justified nor gratified: the imagination can give no aid; for a stock or a stone imagined sensible, cannot be an object of punishment, if the mind be conscious that it is imagination merely, without any reality. Of such personification, involving a conviction of reality, there is one illustrious instance: when the first bridge of boats over the Hellespont was destroyed by a storm, Xerxes fell into a transport of rage, so excessive, that he commanded the sea to be punished with 300 stripes; and a pair of fetters to be thrown into it, enjoining the following words to be pronounced—"O thou salt and bitter water! thy master hath condemned thee to this punishment for offending him without cause; and is resolved to pass over thee in despite of thy insolence: with reason all men neglect to sacrifice to thee, because thou art both disagreeable and treacherous."\*

Shakspeare exhibits beautiful examples of the irregular influence of passion in making us believe things to be otherwise than what they are. King Lear, in his distress, personifies the rain, wind, and thunder; and, in order to justify his resentment, believes them to be taking part with his daughters:

*Lear.* Rumble thy bellyful, spit fire, spout rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;  
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you children;  
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure.—Here I stand, your slave;  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man!  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
Your high-engender'd battles, 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. Oh! oh! 'tis foul!

*Lear, Act III. Sc. 2.*

King Richard, full of indignation against his favorite horse for carrying Bolingbroke, is led into the conviction of his being rational:

*Groom.* O, how it yearn'd my heart, when I beheld  
In London streets, that coronation-day,  
When Bolingbroke rode on Roan Barbary,  
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,  
That horse that I so carefully have dressed.  
*K. Rich.* Rode he on Barbary? tell me, gentle friend,  
How went he under him?  
*Groom.* So proudly as he had disdain'd the ground.  
*K. Rich.* So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!  
That jade had eat bread from my royal hand.  
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.  
Would he not stumble? would he not fall down,  
(Since pride must have a fall,) and break the neck  
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?

*Richard II. Act V. Sc. 5.*

Hamlet, swelled with indignation at his mother's second marriage, was strongly inclined to lessen the time of her widowhood, the shortness of the time being a violent circumstance against her; and he deludes himself, by degrees, into the opinion of an interval shorter than the real one:

*Hamlet.*—————That it should come to this!  
But two months dead! nay, not so much; not two;—

\* Herodotus, book 7.

So excellent a king, that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,  
That he permitted not the winds of heav'n  
Visit her face too roughly. Heav'n and earth  
Must I remember—why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on; yet, within a month,—  
Let me not think—Frailty, thy name is *Women*!  
A little month; or ere these shoes were old,  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears——Why she, e'en she——  
(O heav'n! a beast that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer)—married with mine uncle,  
My father's brother; but no more like my father,  
Than I to Hercules. Within a month!——  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her gauled eyes,  
She married——Oh, most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 3.*

The power of passion to falsify the computation of time is remarkable in this instance; because time, which has an accurate measure, is less obsequious to our desires and wishes, than objects which have no precise standard of less or more.

Good news are greedily swallowed upon very slender evidence: our wishes magnify the probability of the event, as well as the veracity of the relater; and we believe as certain, what at best is doubtful. For the same reason, bad news gain also credit upon the slightest evidence: fear, if once alarmed, has the same effect that hope has, to magnify every circumstance that tends to conviction. Shakspeare, who shows more knowledge of human nature than any of our philosophers, has in his *Cymbeline*\* represented this bias of the mind; for he makes the person who alone was affected with the bad news, yield to evidence that did not convince any of his companions. And Othello† is convinced of his wife's infidelity from circumstances too slight to move any person less interested.

If the news interest us in so low a degree as to give place to reason, the effect will not be altogether the same: judging of the probability or improbability of the story, the mind settles in a rational conviction, either that it is true or not. But, even in that case, the mind is not allowed to rest in that degree of conviction which is produced by rational evidence: if the news be, in any degree, favorable, our belief is raised by hope to an improper height; and if unfavorable, by fear.

This observation holds equally with respect to future events: if a future event be either much wished or dreaded, the mind never fails to augment the probability beyond truth.

That easiness of belief with respect to wonders and prodigies, even the most absurd and ridiculous, is a strange phenomenon; because nothing can be more evident than the following proposition, that the more singular any event is, the more evidence is required

\* Act II. Sc. 4.

† Act III. Sc. 4.

to produce belief. A familiar event daily occurring, being in itself extremely probable, finds ready credit, and therefore is vouched by the slightest evidence; but to overcome the improbability of a strange and rare event, contrary to the course of nature, the very strongest evidence is required. It is certain, however, that wonders and prodigies are swallowed by the vulgar, upon evidence that would not be sufficient to ascertain the most familiar occurrence. It has been reckoned difficult to explain that irregular bias of mind; but we are now made acquainted with the influence of passion upon opinion and belief: a story of ghosts or fairies, told with an air of gravity and truth, raises an emotion of wonder, and perhaps of dread; and these emotions imposing upon a weak mind, impress upon it a thorough conviction contrary to reason.

Opinion and belief are influenced by propensity as well as by passion. An innate propensity is all we have to convince us, that the operations of nature are uniform: influenced by that propensity, we often rashly think, that good or bad weather will never have an end; and in natural philosophy, writers, influenced by the same propensity, stretch, commonly, their analogical reasonings beyond just bounds.

Opinion and belief are influenced by affection as well as by propensity. The noted story of a fine lady and a curate viewing the moon through a telescope, is a pleasant illustration. I perceive, says the lady, two shadows inclining to each other; they are certainly two happy lovers. Not at all, replies the curate; they are two steeples of a cathedral.

## APPENDIX TO PART V.

### METHODS THAT NATURE HAS AFFORDED FOR COMPUTING TIME AND SPACE.

The succession of our thoughts the only natural method of computing time; but this is inaccurate—Two periods of computing time, passing and past—Examples of time passing: Absence appears long to lovers—Time appears short to a criminal between sentence and execution—Time appears long when bodily pain is fixed to one part of the body—Examples of time past: Here we measure by succession of thought—To distinguish between a train of perceptions and a train of ideas here necessary—Time employed on real objects appears longer than that spent on ideas—When passing through a populous country time appears longer than when passing through a barren one—Time appears short when travelling with agreeable company, or when engaged in agreeable work—Close thinking renders time short—Grief has the same effect.

THIS subject is introduced, because it affords several curious examples of the influence of passion to bias the mind in its conceptions and opinions—a lesson that cannot be too frequently inculcated, as there is not; perhaps, another bias in human nature that has an influence, so universal, to make us wander from truth as well as from justice.

I begin with time; and the question is, what was the measure of time before artificial measures were invented; and what is the measure at present when these are not at hand? I speak not of months



and days, which are computed by the moon and sun; but of hours, or in general of the time that passes between any two occurrences when there is not access to the sun. The only natural measure is the succession of our thoughts; for we always judge the time to be long or short, in proportion to the number of perceptions and ideas that have passed during that interval. This measure is, indeed, far from being accurate; because in a quick and in a slow succession, it must evidently produce different computations of the same time: but, however inaccurate, it is the only measure by which we naturally calculate time; and that measure is applied on all occasions, without regard to any casual variation in the rate of succession.

That measure would however be tolerable, did it labor under no other imperfection beside that mentioned: but in many instances it is much more fallacious; in order to explain which distinctly, an analysis will be necessary. Time is computed at two different periods; one while it is passing, another after it is past: these computations shall be considered separately, with the errors to which each of them is liable. Beginning with computation of time, while it is passing, it is a common and trite observation, that to lovers absence appears immeasurably long—every minute an hour, and every day a year: the same computation is made in every case where we long for a distant event; as where one is in expectation of good news, or where a profligate heir watches for the death of an old rich miser. Opposite to these are instances not fewer in number: to a criminal the interval between sentence and execution appears wofully short: and the same holds in every case where one dreads an approaching event; of which, even a school-boy can bear witness: the hour allowed him for play, moves, in his apprehension, with a very swift pace; before he is thoroughly engaged, the hour is gone. A computation founded on the number of ideas, will never produce estimates so regularly opposite to each other; for our wishes do not produce a slow succession of ideas, nor our fears a quick succession. What then moves nature, in the cases mentioned, to desert her ordinary measure for one very different? I know not that this question ever has been resolved; the false estimates I have suggested being so common and familiar, that no writer has thought of their cause. And, indeed, to enter upon this matter without preparation, might occasion some difficulty; to encounter which we are luckily prepared, by what is said upon the power of passion to bias the mind in its perceptions and opinions. Among the circumstances that terrify a condemned criminal, the short time he has to live is one; which time, by the influence of terror, is made to appear still shorter than it is in reality. In the same manner, among the distresses of an absent lover, the time of separation is a capital circumstance, which for that reason is greatly magnified by his anxiety and impatience: he imagines that the time of meeting comes on very slowly, or rather that it will never come: every minute is thought of an intolerable length. Here is a fair, and, I hope, satisfactory reason, why time is thought to be tedious when we long for a future event, and not less fleet when we dread the event. The reason is confirmed



by other instances. Bodily pain, fixed to one part, produces a slow train of perceptions, which, according to the common measure of time, ought to make it appear short: yet we know, that, in such a state, time has the opposite appearance; and the reason is, that bodily pain is always attended with a degree of impatience, which makes us think every minute to be an hour. The same holds where the pain shifts from place to place; but not so remarkably, because such a pain is not attended with the same degree of impatience. The impatience a man has in travelling through a barren country, or in a bad road, makes him think, during the journey, that time goes on with a very slow pace. We shall see afterward, that a very different computation is made when the journey is over.

How ought it to stand with a person who apprehends bad news? It will probably be thought that the case of this person resembles that of a criminal, who, terrified at his approaching execution, believes every hour to be but a minute: yet the computation is directly opposite. Reflecting upon the difficulty, there appears one capital distinguishing circumstance: the fate of the criminal is determined; in the case under consideration, the person is still in suspense. Every one has felt the distress that accompanies suspense: we wish to get rid of it at any rate, even at the expense of bad news. This case, therefore, upon a more narrow inspection, resembles that of bodily pain: the present distress, in both cases, makes the time appear extremely tedious.

The reader, probably, will not be displeased, to have this branch of the subject illustrated, by an author who is acquainted with every maze of the human heart, and who bestows ineffable grace and ornament upon every subject he handles:

*Rosalinda.* I pray you, what is't a-clock?

*Orlando.* You should ask me, what time o'day; there's no clock in the forest.

*Ros.* Then there is no true lover in the forest; else, sighing every minute, and groaning every hour, would detect the lazy foot of Time, as well as a clock.

*Orla.* Why not the swift foot of Time? Had not that been as proper?

*Ros.* By no means, sir. Time travels in diverse paces with diverse persons. I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

*Orla.* I pr'ythee whom doth he trot withal?

*Ros.* Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'ennight, Time's pace is so hard, that it seems the length of seven years.

*Orla.* Who ambles Time withal?

*Ros.* With a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout: for the one sleeps easily, because he cannot study; and the other lives merrily, because he feels no pain: the one lacking the burthen of lean and wasteful learning: the other knowing no burthen of heavy tedious penury. These Times ambles withal.

*Orla.* Whom doth he gallop withal?

*Ros.* With a thief to the gallows: for, tho' he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

*Orla.* Whom stays it still withal?

*Ros.* With lawyers in the vacation: for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how Time moves.

*As You Like It*, Act III. Sc. 2.

The natural method of computing present time, shows how far

from truth we may be led by the irregular influence of passion: nor are our eyes immediately opened when the scene is past; for the deception continues while there remain any traces of the passion. But looking back upon past time when the joy or distress is no longer remembered, the computation is very different: in that condition, we coolly and deliberately make use of the ordinary measure, namely, the course of our perceptions. And I shall now proceed to the errors to which this measure is subjected. Here we must distinguish between a train of perceptions, and a train of ideas. Real objects make a strong impression, and are faithfully remembered: ideas, on the contrary, however entertaining at the time, are apt to escape a subsequent recollection. Hence it is, that in retrospection, the time that was employed upon real objects, appears longer than that employed upon ideas: the former are more accurately recollected than the latter; and we measure the time by the number that is recollected. This doctrine shall be illustrated by examples. After finishing a journey through a populous country, the frequency of agreeable objects, distinctly recollected by the traveler, makes the time spent in the journey appear to him longer than it was in reality; which is chiefly remarkable in the first journey, when every object is new, and makes a strong impression. On the other hand, after finishing a journey through a barren country thinly peopled, the time appears short, being measured by the number of objects, which were few, and far from interesting. Here in both instances a computation is made, directly opposite to that made during the journey. And this, by the way, serves to account for what may appear singular, that in a barren country, a computed mile is always longer, than near the capital, where the country is rich and populous: the traveler has no natural measure of the miles he has traveled, other than the time bestowed upon the journey; nor any natural measure of the time, other than the number of his perceptions: now these, being few from the paucity of objects in a waste country, lead him to compute that the time has been short, and consequently that the miles have been few: by the same method of computation, the great number of perceptions, from the quantity of objects in a populous country, make the traveler conjecture that the time has been long, and the miles many. The last step of the computation is obvious: in estimating the distance of one place from another, if the miles be reckoned few in number, each mile must of course be long; if many in number, each must be short.

Again, traveling with an agreeable companion, produces a short computation both of the road and of time; especially if there be few objects that demand attention, or if the objects be familiar: and the case is the same of young people at a ball, or of a joyous company over a bottle: the ideas with which they have been entertained, being transitory, escape the memory: after the journey and the entertainment are over, they reflect that they have been much diverted, but scarcely can say about what.

When one is totally occupied with any agreeable work that admits not many objects, time runs on without observation: and upon a

subsequent recollection, must appear short, in proportion to the paucity of objects. This is still more remarkable in close contemplation and in deep thinking, where the train, composed wholly of ideas, proceeds with an extremely slow pace: not only are the ideas few in number, but are apt to escape an after reckoning. The like false reckoning of time may proceed from an opposite state of mind: in a reverie, where ideas float at random without making any impression, time goes on unheeded, and the reckoning is lost. A reverie may be so profound as to prevent the recollection of any one idea: that the mind was busied in a train of thinking, may, in general, be remembered; but what was the subject, has quite escaped the memory. In such a case, we are altogether at a loss about the time, having no *data* for making a computation. No cause produces so false a reckoning of time, as immoderate grief: the mind, in that state, is violently attached to a single object, and admits not a different thought: any other object breaking in, is instantly banished, so as scarcely to give an appearance of succession. In a reverie, we are uncertain of the time that is past; but, in the example now given, there is an appearance of certainty, that the time must have been short, when the perceptions are so few in number.

The natural measure of space, appears more obscure than that of time. I venture, however, to mention it, leaving it to be farther prosecuted, if it be thought of any importance.

The space marked out for a house appears considerably larger after it is divided into its proper parts. A piece of ground appears larger after it is surrounded with a fence; and still larger when it is made a garden and divided into different compartments.

On the contrary, a large plain looks less after it is divided into parts. The sea must be excepted, which looks less from that very circumstance of not being divided into parts.

A room of a moderate size appears larger when properly furnished. But, when a very large room is furnished, I doubt whether it be not lessened in appearance.

A room of a moderate size looks less by having a ceiling lower than in proportion. The same low ceiling makes a very large room look larger than it is in reality.

These experiments are by far too small a stock for a general theory: but they are all that occur at present; and, instead of a regular system, I have nothing for the reader's instruction but a few conjectures.

The largest angle of vision seems to be the natural measure of space: the eye is the only judge; and in examining with it the size of any plain, or the length of any line, the most accurate method that can be taken is, to run over the object in parts: the largest part that can be seen with one steadfast look, determines the largest angle of vision; and, when that angle is given, one may institute a calculation, by trying with the eye how many of these parts are in the whole.

Whether this angle be the same in all men, I know not: the smallest angle of vision is ascertained; and to ascertain the largest, would not be less curious.

But supposing it known, it would be a very imperfect measure: perhaps more so than the natural measure of time: for it requires great steadiness of eye to measure a line with any accuracy, by applying to it the largest angle of distinct vision. And supposing that steadiness to be acquired by practice, the measure will be imperfect from other circumstances. The space comprehended under this angle will be different according to the distance, and also according to the situation of the object: of a perpendicular this angle will comprehend the smallest space; the space will be larger in looking upon an inclined plain; and will be larger or less in proportion to the degree of inclination.

This measure of space, like the measure of time, is liable to several errors, from certain operations of the mind, which will account for some of the erroneous judgments above mentioned. The space marked out for a dwelling-house, where the eye is at any reasonable distance, is seldom greater than can be seen at once, without moving the head: divide that space into two or three equal parts, and none of these parts will appear much less than what can be comprehended at one distinct look; consequently each of them will appear equal, or nearly equal, to what the whole did before the division. If, on the other hand, the whole be very small, so as scarcely to fill the eye at one look, its division into parts will, I conjecture, make it appear still less: the minuteness of the parts is, by an easy transition of ideas, transferred to the whole; and we pass the same judgment on the latter that we do on the former.

The space marked out for a small garden is surveyed almost at one view; and requires a motion of the eye so slight, as to pass for an object that can be comprehended under the largest angle of distinct vision: if not divided into too many parts, we are apt to form the same judgment of each part, and consequently to magnify the garden in proportion to the number of its parts.

A very large plain without protuberances is an object no less rare than beautiful; and in those who see it for the first time, it must produce an emotion of wonder. That emotion, however slight, imposes on the mind, and makes it judge that the plain is larger than it is in reality. Divide the plain into parts, and our wonder ceases; it is no longer considered as one great plain, but as so many different fields or inclosures.

The first time one beholds the sea, it appears to be large beyond all bounds. When it becomes familiar, and ceases to raise our wonder, it appears less than it is in reality. In a storm it appears large, being distinguishable by the rolling waves into a number of great parts. Islands scattered at considerable distances, add in appearance to its size: each intercepted part looks extremely large, and we insensibly apply arithmetic to increase the appearance of the whole. Many islands scattered at hand, give a diminutive appearance to the sea, by its connection with its diminutive parts: the Lomond lake would undoubtedly look larger without its islands.

Furniture increases in appearance the size of a small room, for the same reason that divisions increase in appearance the size of a

garden. The emotion of wonder which is raised by a very large room without furniture, makes it look larger than it is in reality: it completely furnished, we view it in parts, and our wonder is not raised.

A low ceiling has a diminutive appearance, which, by an easy transition of ideas, is communicated to the length and breadth, provided they bear any proportion to the height. If they be out of all proportion, the opposition seizes the mind, and raises some degree of wonder, which makes the difference appear greater than it really is.

## PART VI.

### THE RESEMBLANCE OF EMOTIONS TO THEIR CAUSES.

Many emotions resemble their causes—Examples: Motion—Sounds—A wall or pillar—Pasture—Emotions raised by the qualities, actions, and passions of a sensible being—Love—Gratitude, courage, and all virtuous actions—Grief—Fear—Pity—Emotions raised by bad passions and actions do not resemble their causes.

THAT many emotions have some resemblance to their causes, is a truth that can be made clear by induction; though, as far as I know, the observation has not been made by any writer. Motion, in its different circumstances, is productive of feelings that resemble it: sluggish motion, for example, causes a languid unpleasant feeling; slow uniform motion, a feeling calm and pleasant; and brisk motion, a lively feeling that rouses the spirits, and promotes activity. A fall of water through rocks, raises, in the mind, a tumultuous, confused agitation, extremely similar to its cause. When force is exerted with any effort, the spectator feels a similar effort, as of force exerted within his mind. A large object swells in the heart. An elevated object makes the spectator stand erect.

Sounds also produce emotions or feelings that resemble them. A sound in a low key brings down the mind; such a sound in a full tone has a certain solemnity, which it communicates to the feeling produced by it. A sound in a high key cheers the mind by raising it: such a sound in a full tone both elevates and swells the mind.

Again, a wall or pillar that declines from the perpendicular, produces a painful feeling, as of a tottering and falling within the mind: and a feeling somewhat similar is produced by a tall pillar that stands so ticklish as to look like falling.\* A column with a base looks more firm and stable than upon the naked ground; and for that reason is more agreeable: and though the cylinder is a more

\* *Sunt enim Tempe saltus transitu difficilis: nam præter angustias per quinque millia, qua exiguum jumento onusto iter est, rupes utrinque ita abscissæ sunt, ut despici vix sine vertigine quadam simul oculorum animique possit.*

*Titus Livius, lib. 44. sect. 6.*

For the forest of Tempe is difficult to pass—besides the narrowness for five miles affording scant passage for a laden beast, the rocks on each side are so parted, that they can scarcely be contemplated, without a certain giddiness, both of the eyes and the brain.

beautiful figure, yet the cube for a base is preferred: its angles being extended to a greater distance from the centre than the circumference of a cylinder. This excludes not a different reason, that the base, the shaft, and the capital of a pillar, ought, for the sake of variety, to differ from each other: if the shaft be round, the base and capital ought to be square.

A constrained posture, uneasy to the man himself, is disagreeable to the spectator; whence a rule in painting, that the drapery ought not to adhere to the body, but hang loose, that the figures may appear easy and free in their movements. The constrained posture of a French dancing master in one of Hogarth's pieces, is for that reason disagreeable; and it is also ridiculous, because the constraint is assumed as a grace.

The foregoing observation is not confined to emotions or feelings raised by still life: it holds also in those which are raised by the qualities, actions, and passions, of a sensible being. Love inspired by a fine woman assumes her qualities: it is sublime, soft, tender, severe, or gay, according to its cause. This is still more remarkable in emotions raised by human actions: it has already been remarked,\* that any signal instance of gratitude, beside procuring esteem for the author, raises, in the spectator, a vague emotion of gratitude, which disposes him to be grateful; and I now further remark, that this vague emotion has a strong resemblance to its cause, namely, the passion that produced the grateful action. Courage exerted inspires the reader as well as the spectator with a like emotion of courage; a just action fortifies our love of justice, and a generous action rouses our generosity. In short, with respect to all virtuous actions, it will be found by induction, that they lead us to imitation, by inspiring emotions resembling the passions that produce these actions. And hence the advantage of choice books and choice company.

Grief as well as joy is infectious: the emotions they each raise in a spectator resemble them perfectly. Fear is equally infectious: and hence in an army, a few taking fright, even without cause, spread the infection till it becomes an universal panic. Pity is similar to its cause; a parting scene between lovers or friends, produces, in the spectator, a sort of pity, which is tender like the distress: the anguish of remorse, produces pity of a harsh kind; and if the remorse be extreme, the pity has a mixture of horror. Anger I think is singular; for even where it is moderate, and causes no disgust, it disposes not the spectator to anger in any degree.† Covetousness, cruelty, treachery, and other vicious passions, are so far from raising any emotion similar to themselves, to incite a spectator to imitation, that they have an opposite effect: they raise abhorrence, and fortify the spectator in his aversion to such actions. When anger is immoderate, it cannot fail to produce the same effect.

\* Part I. of this chapter, sect. 4.

† Aristotle, Poet. cap. 18. sect. 3. says, that anger raises in the spectator a similar emotion of anger.



## PART VII

## FINAL CAUSES OF THE MORE FREQUENT EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.

Actions always prompted by desire—All passions conducive to public good—An agreeable cause produces a pleasant emotion; a disagreeable cause, painful—Inanimate objects agreeable—They promote happiness—They excite industry—Disagreeable objects hurtful—As a mark of wisdom some objects are indifferent—Inanimate objects that are agreeable, are attractive; the contrary are repulsive—A sensible being agreeable by its attributes, inspires a pleasant emotion, accompanied with desire—Final cause—It promotes our happiness—A painful emotion excited by a person in distress—Self-love would induce us to turn from it—Benevolence, to relieve it—Termed sympathy—Indignation excited by vice and wickedness—To secure us from injury, injury done to ourselves requires retaliation—Painful emotions excited in a delinquent by a disagreeable action, termed remorse—Right or wrong, actions never indifferent to the spectator—When right, they inspire esteem; when wrong, disgust—Good qualities in myself raise esteem as well as in another; mean qualities, inferiority—An appetite for fame useful, and of moral tendency—Communication of passion to related objects extends the social affections—The contrary tendency of malevolent passions—This regards savages only—The economy of the human passions entertaining to the rational mind.

It is a law of our nature, that we never act but by the impulse of desire; which in other words is saying, that passion, by the desire included in it, is what determines the will. Hence in the conduct of life, it is of the utmost importance, that our passions be directed to proper objects, tend to just and rational ends, and with relation to each other, be duly balanced. The beauty of contrivance, so conspicuous in the human frame, is not confined to the rational part of our nature, but is visible over the whole. Concerning the passions in particular, however irregular, headstrong, and perverse, in a slight view, they may appear, I hope to demonstrate, that they are, by nature, modelled and tempered with perfect wisdom, for the good of society as well as for private good. The subject, treated at large, would be too extensive for the present work: all there is room for is a few general observations upon the sensitive part of our nature, without regarding that strange irregularity of passion discovered in some individuals. Such topical irregularities, if I may use the term, cannot fairly be held an objection to the present theory. We are frequently, it is true, misled by inordinate passion; but we are also, and perhaps no less frequently, misled by wrong judgment.

In order to fulfil my engagement, it must be premised, that an agreeable cause always produces a pleasant emotion; and a disagreeable cause, a painful emotion. This is a general law of nature, which admits not a single exception. Agreeableness in the cause is indeed so essentially connected with pleasure in the emotion, its effect, that an agreeable cause cannot be better defined, than by its power of producing a pleasant emotion: and disagreeableness in the cause has the same necessary connection with pain in the emotion produced by it.

From this preliminary it appears, that in order to know for what end an emotion is made pleasant or painful, we must begin with

inquiring for what end its cause is made agreeable or disagreeable. And, with respect to inanimate objects, considered as the causes of emotions, many of them are made agreeable in order to promote our happiness; and it proves invincibly the benignity of the Deity, that we are placed in the midst of objects for the most part agreeable. But that is not all. The bulk of such objects, being of real use in life, are made agreeable in order to excite our industry: witness a large tree, a well-dressed fallow, a rich field of grain, and others that may be named without end. On the other hand, it is not easy to specify a disagreeable object that is not at the same time hurtful. Some things are made disagreeable, such as a rotten carcase, because they are noxious: others, a dirty marsh, for example, or a barren heath, are made disagreeable, in order, as above, to excite our industry. And, with respect to the few things that are neither agreeable nor disagreeable, it will be made evident, that their being left indifferent is not a work of chance but of wisdom: of such I shall have occasion to give several instances.

Because inanimate objects that are agreeable fix our attention, and draw us to them, they in that respect are termed *attractive*: such objects inspire pleasant emotions, which are gratified by adhering to the objects, and enjoying them. Because disagreeable objects of the same kind repel us from them, they, in that respect, are termed *repulsive*: and the painful emotions raised by such objects are gratified by flying from them. Thus, in general, with respect to things inanimate, the tendency of every pleasant emotion is to prolong the pleasure; and the tendency of every painful emotion is to end the pain.

Sensible beings considered as objects of passion, lead into a more complex theory. A sensible being that is agreeable by its attributes, inspires us with a pleasant emotion accompanied with desire; and the question is, what is naturally the gratification of that desire? Were man altogether selfish, his nature would lead him to indulge the pleasant emotion, without making any acknowledgment to the person who gives him pleasure, more than to a pure air or temperate clime: but as man is endued with a principle of benevolence as well as of selfishness, he is prompted by his nature to desire the good of every sensible being that gives him pleasure; and the happiness of that being is the gratification of his desire. The final cause of desire so directed is illustrious: it contributes to a man's own happiness, by affording him means of gratification beyond what selfishness can afford; and, at the same time, it tends eminently to advance the happiness of others. This lays open a beautiful theory in the nature of man. A selfish action can only benefit myself: a benevolent action benefits myself as much as it benefits others. In a word, benevolence may not improperly be said to be the most refined selfishness; which, by the way, ought to silence certain shallow philosophers, who, ignorant of human nature, teach a disgusting doctrine, that to serve others, unless with a view to our own happiness, is weakness and folly; as if self-love only, and not benevolence, contributed to our happiness. The hand of God is too visible in the



human frame, to permit us to think seriously, that there ever can be any jarring or inconsistency among natural principles, those especially of self-love and benevolence, which govern the bulk of our actions.\*

Next in order come sensible beings that are in distress. A person in distress, being so far a disagreeable object, must raise in a spectator a painful passion; and, were man purely a selfish being, he would desire to be relieved from that pain, by turning from the object. But the principle of benevolence gives an opposite direction to his desire: it makes him desire to afford relief: and by relieving the person from distress, his passion is gratified. The painful passion thus directed, is termed *sympathy*; which, though painful, is yet in its nature attractive. And, with respect to its final cause, we can be at no loss: it not only tends to relieve a fellow-creature from distress, but in its gratification is greatly more pleasant than if it were repulsive.

We, in the last place, bring under consideration persons hateful by vice or wickedness. Imagine a wretch who has lately perpetrated some horrid crime: he is disagreeable to every spectator; and consequently raises in every spectator a painful passion. What is the natural gratification of that passion? I must here again observe, that, supposing man to be entirely a selfish being, he would be prompted by his nature to relieve himself from the pain, by averting his eye, and banishing the criminal from his thoughts. But man is not so constituted: he is composed of many principles, which, though seemingly contradictory, are perfectly concordant. His actions are influenced by the principle of benevolence, as well as by that of selfishness: and in order to answer the foregoing question, I must introduce a third principle, no less remarkable in its influence than either of these mentioned; it is that principle, common to all, which prompts us to punish those who do wrong. An envious, a malicious, or a cruel action, being disagreeable, raises in the spectator the painful emotion of resentment, which frequently swells into a passion; and the natural gratification of the desire included in that passion, is to punish the guilty person: I must chastise the wretch by indignation at least and hatred, if not more severely. Here the final cause is self-evident.

An injury done to myself, touching me more than when done to

\* With shallow thinkers the selfish system naturally prevails in theory, I do not say in practice. During infancy, our desires centre mostly in ourselves: every one perceives intuitively the comfort of food and raiment, of a snug dwelling, and of every convenience. But that doing good to others will make us happy, is not so evident; feeding the hungry, for example, or clothing the naked. This truth is seen but obscurely by the gross of mankind, if at all seen: the superior pleasure that accompanies the exercise of benevolence, of friendship, and of every social principle, is not clearly understood till it be frequently felt. To perceive the social principle in its triumphant state, a man must forget himself, and turn his thoughts upon the character and conduct of his fellow-creatures: he will feel a secret charm in every passion that tends to the good of others, and a secret aversion against every unfeeling heart that is indifferent to the happiness and distress of others. In a word, it is but too common for men to indulge selfishness in themselves; but all men abhor it in others.

others, raises my resentment to a higher degree. The desire, accordingly, included in this passion, is not satisfied with so slight a punishment as indignation or hatred; it is not fully gratified with retaliation; and the author must by my hand suffer mischief, as great, at least, as he has done to me. Neither can we be at any loss about the final cause of that higher degree of resentment: the whole vigor of the passion is required to secure individuals from the injustice and oppression of others.\*

A wicked or disgraceful action is disagreeable not only to others, but even to the delinquent himself; and raises in both a painful emotion including a desire of punishment. The painful emotion felt by the delinquent, is distinguished by the name of *remorse*; which naturally excites him to punish himself. There cannot be imagined a better contrivance to deter us from vice; for remorse itself is a severe punishment. That passion, and the desire of self-punishment derived from it, are touched delicately by Terence:

*Menedemus.* Ubi comperi ex iis, qui ei fuere conscii,  
Domum revortor mœstus, atque animo fere  
Perturbato, atque incerto præ ægritudine:  
Adsido; adcurrunt servi, soccos detrahunt:  
Video alios festinare, lectos sternere,  
Cœnam adparare: pro se quisque sedulo  
Faciebat, quo illam mihi lenirent miseriam.  
Ubi video hæc, cœpi cogitare: Hem! tot mea  
Soli solliciti sunt causa, ut me unum expleant?  
Ancillæ tot me vestiant? sumptus domi  
Tantos ego solus faciam? sed gnatum unicum,  
Quem pariter uti his decuit, aut etiam amplius,  
Quod illa ætas magis ad hæc utenda idonea est,  
Eum ego hinc ejici miserum injustitia mea.  
Malo quidem me dignum quovis deputem,  
Si id faciam: nam usque dum ille vitam illam colet  
Inopem, carens patria ob meas injurias,  
Interea usque illi de me supplicium dabo:  
Laborans, quærens, parcens, illi serviens.  
Ita facio prorsus: nihil relinquo in ædibus,  
Nec vas, nec vestimentum: contrasi omnia,  
Ancillas, servos, nisi eos, qui opere rustico  
Faciundo facile sumptum exercerent suum:  
Omnes produxi ac vendidi: inscripsi illico  
Ædes mercede: quasi talenta ad quindecim  
Coëgi: agrum hunc mercatus sum: hic me exerceo.  
Decrevi tantisper me minus injuriæ,  
Chreme, meo gnato facere, dum fiam miser:  
Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hic frui,  
Nisi ubi ille huc salvos redierit meus particeps.†

*Heautontimorumenos*, Act I. Sc. 1.

Otway reaches the same sentiment:

*Monimia.* Let mischiefs multiply! let ev'ry hour  
Of my loath'd life yield me increase of horror!  
Oh let the sun to these unhappy eyes  
Ne'er shine again, but be eclips'd for ever!

\* See Historical Law Tracts, Tract 1.

† As the sentiment contained in this extract from Terence is also found in the passage from Otway, that follows it, the editor thought it unnecessary to introduce a translation.

May every thing I look on seem a prodigy,  
 To fill my soul with terror, till I quite  
 Forget I ever had humanity,  
 And grow a curser of the works of nature!

*Orphan, Act IV.*

In the cases mentioned, benevolence alone, or desire of punishment alone, governs without a rival; and it was necessary to handle these cases separately, in order to elucidate a subject which by writers is left in great obscurity. But neither of these principles operates always without rivalry: cases may be imagined, and cases actually exist, where the same person is an object both of sympathy and of punishment. Thus the sight of a profligate in the venereal disease, overrun with blotches and sores, puts both principles in motion: while his distress fixes my attention, sympathy prevails; but as soon as I think of his profligacy, hatred prevails, accompanied, sometimes, with a desire to punish. This, in general, is the case of distress occasioned by immoral action that are not highly criminal: and if the distress and the immoral actions make impressions equal or nearly so, sympathy and hatred, counterbalancing each other, will not suffer me either to afford relief, or to inflict punishment. What then will be the result? The principle of self-love solves the question: abhorring an object so loathsome, I naturally avert my eye, and walk off as fast as I can, in order to be relieved from the pain.

The present subject gives birth to several other observations, for which I could not find room above, without relaxing more from the strictness of order and connection, than with safety could be indulged in discoursing upon an intricate subject. These observations I shall throw out loosely as they occur.

No action, right nor wrong, is indifferent, even to a mere spectator: if right, it inspires esteem; if wrong, disgust. But it is remarkable, that these emotions are seldom accompanied with desire: the abilities of man are limited, and he finds sufficient employment, in relieving the distressed, in requiting his benefactors, and in punishing those who wrong him, without moving out of his sphere for the benefit or chastisement of those with whom he has no connection.

If the good qualities of others raise my esteem, the same qualities in myself must produce a similar effect in a superior degree, upon account of the natural partiality every man has for himself: and this increases self-love. If these qualities be of a high rank, they produce a conviction of superiority, which excites me to assume some sort of government over others. Mean qualities, on the other hand, produce in me a conviction of inferiority, which makes me submit to others. These convictions, distributed among individuals by measure and proportion, may justly be esteemed the solid basis of government; because upon them depends the natural submission of the many to the few, without which even the mildest government would be in a violent state, and have a constant tendency to dissolution.

No other branch of the human constitution shows more visibly our destination for society, nor tends more to our improvement, than

appetite for fame or esteem: for as the whole conveniences of life are derived from mutual aid and support in society, it ought to be a capital aim to secure these conveniences, by gaining the esteem and affection of others. Reason, indeed, dictates that lesson: but reason alone is not sufficient in a matter of such importance; and the appetite mentioned is a motive more powerful than reason, to be active in gaining esteem and affection. That appetite, at the same time, is finely adjusted to the moral branch of our constitution, by promoting all the moral virtues: for what means are there to attract love and esteem so effectual as a virtuous course of life? if a man be just and beneficent, if he be temperate, modest, and prudent, he will infallibly gain the esteem and love of all who know him.

Communication of passion to related objects, is an illustrious instance of the care of Providence to extend social connections as far as the limited nature of man can admit. That communication is so far hurtful, as to spread the malevolent passions beyond their natural bounds: but let it be remarked, that this unhappy effect regards savages only, who give way to malevolent passions; for under the discipline of society, these passions being subdued, are in a good measure eradicated; and in their place succeed the kindly affections, which, meeting with all encouragement, take possession of the mind, and govern all our actions. In that condition, the progress of passion along related objects, by spreading the kindly affections through a multitude of individuals, has a glorious effect.

Nothing can be more entertaining to a rational mind, than the economy of the human passions, of which I have attempted to give some faint notion. It must, however, be acknowledged, that our passions, when they happen to swell beyond proper limits, assume a less regular appearance: reason may proclaim our duty, but the will, influenced by passion, makes gratification always welcome. Hence the power of passion, which, when in excess, can only be resisted by the utmost fortitude of mind: it is bent upon gratification; and where proper objects are wanting, it clings to any object at hand without distinction. Thus joy, inspired by a fortunate event, is diffused upon every person around by acts of benevolence; and resentment for an atrocious injury done by one out of reach, seizes the first object that occurs upon which to vent itself. Those who believe in prophecies, even wish the accomplishment; and a weak mind is disposed voluntarily to fulfil a prophecy, in order to gratify its wish. Shakspeare, whom no particle of human nature has escaped, however remote from common observation, describes that weakness:

*K. Henry.* Doth any name particular belong  
Unto that lodging where I first did swoon?

*Warwick.* 'Tis call'd *Jerusalem*, my noble lord.

*K. Henry.* Laud be to God! ev'n there my life must end,  
It hath been prophesy'd to me many years,  
I should not die but in *Jerusalem*,  
Which vainly I suppos'd the Holy Land.  
But bear me to that chamber, there I'll lie:  
In that *Jerusalem* shall Henry die.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act IV. Sc. last.*

I could not deny myself the amusement of the foregoing observation, though it does not properly come under my plan. The irregularities of passion proceeding from peculiar weaknesses and biasses, I do not undertake to justify; and of these we have had many examples.\* It is sufficient that passions common to all, are made subservient to beneficent purposes. I shall only observe, that, in a polished society, instances of irregular passions are rare, and that their mischief does not extend far.

## CHAPTER III.

### BEAUTY.

The term beauty appropriated to objects of sight—Objects of sight complex—Constituents of the beauty of the human species—Intrinsic and relative beauty—The effect when both are united—Simplicity essential to beauty—Regularity and order please because they increase our happiness—A curve line more beautiful than a square; a square, than a parallelogram, or an equilateral triangle—Uniformity disgusts by excess—Difference between primary and secondary qualities—Primary exist in the object; secondary in the percipient—Final cause of beauty: It prompts to industry—It secures social intercourse.

HAVING discoursed in general of emotions and passions, I proceed to a more narrow inspection of such of them as serve to unfold the principles of the fine arts. It is the province of a writer upon ethics, to give a full enumeration of all the passions; and of each separately to assign the nature, the cause, the gratification, and the effects. But a treatise of ethics is not my province: I carry my view no farther than to the elements of criticism, in order to show, that the fine arts are a subject of reasoning as well as of taste. An extensive work would ill suit a design so limited: and to confine this work within moderate bounds, the following plan may contribute. The observation made above, that things are the causes of emotions, by means of their properties and attributes,† furnishes a hint for distribution. Instead of a painful and tedious examination of the several passions and emotions, I purpose to confine my inquiries to such attributes, relations, and circumstances, as in the fine arts are chiefly employed to raise agreeable emotions. Attributes of single objects, as the most simple, shall take the lead; to be followed with particulars, which, depending on relations, are not found in single objects. Dispatching next some coincident matters, I shall proceed to my chief aim; which is, to establish practical rules for the fine arts, derived from principles previously established. This is a general view of the intended method; reserving, however, a privilege to vary it in particular instances, where a deviation may be more commodious. I begin with Beauty, the most noted of all the qualities that belong to single objects.

The term *beauty*, in its native signification, is appropriated to objects of sight: objects of the other senses may be agreeable, such

\* Part 5. of the present chapter. † Chap. 2. part 1. sect 1. first note

as the sounds of musical instruments, the smoothness and softness of some surfaces; but the agreeableness denominated *beauty*, belongs to objects of sight.

Of all the objects of external sense, an object of sight is the most complex: in the very simplest, color is perceived, figure, and length, breadth, and thickness. A tree is composed of a trunk, branches, and leaves; it has color, figure, size, and sometimes motion: by means of each of these particulars, separately considered, it appears beautiful; how much more so, when they are all united together? The beauty of the human figure is extraordinary, being a composition of numberless beauties, arising from the parts and qualities of the object, various colors, various motions, figures, size, &c. all united in one complex object, and striking the eye with combined force. Hence it is, that beauty, a quality so remarkable in visible objects, lends its name to express every thing that is eminently agreeable. thus, by a figure of speech, we say a beautiful sound, a beautiful thought or expression, a beautiful theorem, a beautiful event, a beautiful discovery in art or science. But, as figurative expression is the subject of a following chapter, this chapter is confined to beauty in its proper signification.

It is natural to suppose, that a perception so various as that of beauty, comprehending sometimes many particulars, sometimes few, should occasion emotions equally various: and yet all the various emotions of beauty maintain one common character, that of sweetness and gaiety.

Considering attentively the beauty of visible objects, we discover two kinds. The first may be termed *intrinsic* beauty, because it is discovered in a single object viewed apart without relation to any other: the examples above given are of that kind. The other may be termed *relative* beauty, being founded on the relation of objects. The purposed distribution would lead me to handle these beauties separately; but they are frequently so intimately connected, that, for the sake of connection, I am forced, in this instance, to vary from the plan, and to bring them both into the same chapter. Intrinsic beauty is an object of sense merely: to perceive the beauty of a spreading oak, or of a flowing river, no more is required than simply an act of vision. The perception of relative beauty is accompanied with an act of understanding and reflection; for of a fine instrument or engine, we perceive not the relative beauty, until we be made acquainted with its use and destination. In a word, intrinsic beauty is ultimate: relative beauty is that of means relating to some good end or purpose. These different beauties agree in one capital circumstance, that both are equally perceived as belonging to the object. This is evident with respect to intrinsic beauty; but will not be so readily admitted with respect to the other: the utility of the plough, for example, may make it an object of admiration or of desire: but why should utility make it appear beautiful? A natural propensity mentioned above\* will explain that doubt: the beauty of the effect by an easy transition of ideas, is transferred to the cause; and is per-

\* Chap. 2. part 1. sect. 5.



ceived as one of the qualities of the cause. Thus a subject void of intrinsic beauty appears beautiful from its utility; an old Gothic tower, that has no beauty in itself, appears beautiful, considered as proper to defend against an enemy; a dwelling-house, void of all regularity, is, however, beautiful in the view of convenience; and the want of form or symmetry in a tree, will not prevent its appearing beautiful, if it be known to produce good fruit.

When these two beauties coincide in any object, it appears delightful: every member of the human body possesses both in a high degree: the fine proportions and slender make of a horse destined for running, please every eye; partly from symmetry, and partly from utility.

The beauty of utility, being proportioned accurately to the degree of utility, requires no illustration; but intrinsic beauty, so complex as I have said, cannot be handled distinctly without being analyzed into its constituent parts. If a tree be beautiful by means of its color, its figure, its size, its motion, it is in reality possessed of so many different beauties, which ought to be examined separately, in order to have a clear notion of them when combined. The beauty of color is too familiar to need explanation. Do not the bright and cheerful colors of gold and silver contribute to preserve these metals in high estimation? The beauty of figure, arising from various circumstances and different views, is more complex: for example, viewing any body as a whole, the beauty of its figure arises from regularity and simplicity; viewing the parts with relation to each other, uniformity, proportion, and order, contribute to its beauty. The beauty of motion deserves a chapter by itself; and another chapter is destined for grandeur being distinguishable from beauty in its proper sense. For a description of regularity, uniformity, proportion, and order, if thought necessary, I refer my reader to the Appendix at the end of the book. Upon simplicity I must make a few cursory observations, such as may be of use in examining the beauty of single objects.

A multitude of objects crowding into the mind at once, disturb the attention, and pass without making any impression, or any distinct impression; in a group, no single object makes the figure it would do apart, when it occupies the whole attention.\* For the same reason, the impression made by an object that divides the attention by the multiplicity of its parts, equals not that of a more simple object comprehended in a single view: parts extremely complex must be considered in portions successively; and a number of impressions in succession, which cannot unite because not simultaneous, never touch the mind like one entire impression made, as it were, at one stroke. This justifies simplicity in works of art, as opposed to complicated circumstances and crowded ornaments. There is an additional reason for simplicity, in works of dignity or elevation; which is, that the mind attached to beauties of a high rank, cannot descend to inferior beauties. The best artists, accordingly, have in all ages been governed by a taste for simplicity. How comes it then that we find profuse decoration prevailing in works of art? The reason plainly

\* See the Appendix, containing definitions, and explanation of terms, sect. 33.



is, that authors and architects who cannot reach the higher beauties, endeavor to supply want of genius by multiplying those that are inferior.

These things premised, I proceed to examine the beauty of figure as arising from the above mentioned particulars, namely, regularity, uniformity, proportion, order and simplicity. To exhaust this subject would require a volume; and I have not even a whole chapter to spare. To inquire why an object, by means of the particulars mentioned, appears beautiful, would, I am afraid, be a vain attempt: it seems the most probable opinion, that the nature of man was originally framed with a relish for them, in order to answer wise and good purposes. To explain these purposes or final causes, though a subject of great importance, has scarcely been attempted by any writer. One thing is evident, that our relish for the particulars mentioned adds much beauty to the objects that surround us: which of course tends to our happiness: and the Author of our nature has given many signal proofs that this final cause is not below his care. We may be confirmed in this thought upon reflecting, that our taste for these particulars is not accidental, but uniform and universal, making a branch of our nature. At the same time, it ought not to be overlooked, that regularity, uniformity, order, and simplicity, contribute each of them to readiness of apprehension; enabling us to form more distinct images of objects, than can be done with the utmost attention where these particulars are not found. With respect to proportion, it is in some instances connected with a useful end, as in animals, where the best proportioned are the strongest and most active; but instances are still more numerous, where the proportions we relish have no connection with utility. Writers on architecture insist much on the proportions of a column, and assign different proportions to the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian: but no architect will maintain, that the most accurate proportions contribute more to use, than several that are less accurate and less agreeable; neither will it be maintained, that the length, breadth, and height of rooms assigned as the most beautiful proportions, tend also to make them the more commodious. With respect then to the final cause of proportion, I see not more to be made of it but to rest upon the final cause first mentioned, namely, its contributing to our happiness, by increasing the beauty of visible objects.

And now with respect to the beauty of figure as far as it depends on the other circumstances mentioned; as to which, having room only for a slight specimen, I confine myself to the simplest figures. A circle and a square are each of them perfectly regular, being equally confined to a precise form, which admits not the slightest variation; a square, however, is less beautiful than a circle. And the reason seems to be, that the attention is divided among the sides and angles of a square; whereas the circumference of a circle, being a single object, makes one entire impression. And this simplicity contributes to beauty; which may be illustrated by another example: a square, though not more regular than a hexagon or octagon, is more beautiful than either; for what other reason, but that a square

is more simple, and the attention less divided? This reasoning will appear still more conclusive, when we consider any regular polygon of very many sides; for of this figure the mind can never have any distinct perception.

A square is more regular than a parallelogram, and its parts more uniform; and for these reasons it is more beautiful. But that holds with respect to intrinsic beauty only; for in many instances utility turns the scale on the side of the parallelogram. This figure for the doors and windows of a dwelling-house is preferred, because of utility; and here we find the beauty of utility prevailing over that of regularity and uniformity.

A parallelogram again depends for its beauty, on the proportion of its sides. A great inequality of sides annihilates its beauty: approximation towards equality has the same effect; for proportion there degenerates into imperfect uniformity, and the figure appears an unsuccessful attempt toward a square. And thus proportion contributes to beauty.

An equilateral triangle yields not to a square in regularity, nor in uniformity of parts, and it is more simple. But an equilateral triangle is less beautiful than a square; which must be owing to inferiority of order in the position of its parts; the sides of an equilateral triangle incline to each other in the same angle, being the most perfect order of which they are susceptible; but this order is obscure, and far from being so perfect as the parallelism of the sides of a square. Thus order contributes to the beauty of visible objects, no less than simplicity, regularity, or proportion.

A parallelogram exceeds an equilateral triangle in the orderly disposition of its parts; but being inferior in uniformity and simplicity, it is less beautiful.

Uniformity is singular in one capital circumstance, that it is apt to disgust by excess: a number of things destined for the same use, such as windows, chairs, spoons, buttons, cannot be too uniform; for supposing their figure to be good, utility requires uniformity: but a scrupulous uniformity of parts in a large garden or field, is far from being agreeable. Uniformity among connected objects belongs not to the present subject: it is handled in the chapter of uniformity and variety.

In all the works of nature, simplicity makes an illustrious figure. It also makes a figure in works of art: profuse ornament in painting, gardening, or architecture, as well as in dress, or in language, shows a mean or corrupted taste:

Poets, like painters, thus unskilled to trace  
The naked nature and the living grace,  
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,  
And hide with ornaments their want of art.

*Pope's Essay on Criticism.*

No single property recommends a machine more than its simplicity; not solely for better answering its purpose, but by appearing in itself more beautiful. Simplicity in behavior and manners has an encharming effect, and never fails to gain our affection: very differ-

ent are the artificial manners of modern times. General theorems, abstracting from their importance, are delightful by their simplicity, and by the easiness of their application to variety of cases. We take equal delight in the laws of motion, which, with the greatest simplicity, are boundless in their operations.

A gradual progress from simplicity to complex forms and profuse ornament, seems to be the fate of all the fine arts: in that progress these arts resemble behavior, which, from original candor and simplicity, has degenerated into artificial refinements. At present, literary productions are crowded with words, epithets, figures: in music, sentiment is neglected for the luxury of harmony, and for difficult movement: in *taste*, properly so called, poignant sauces, with complicated mixtures, of different savors, prevail among people of condition: the French, accustomed to artificial red on a female cheek, think the modest coloring of nature altogether insipid.

The same tendency is discovered in the progress of the fine arts among the ancients. Some vestiges of the old Grecian buildings prove them to be of the Doric order: the Ionic succeeded, and seems to have been the favorite order, while architecture was in the height of glory: the Corinthian came next in vogue; and in Greece the buildings of that order appear mostly to have been erected after the Romans got footing there. At last came the Composite, with all its extravagancies, where simplicity is sacrificed to finery and crowded ornament.

But what taste is to prevail next? for fashion is a continual flux, and taste must vary with it. After rich and profuse ornaments become familiar, simplicity appears lifeless and insipid; which, would be an unsurmountable obstruction, should any person of genius and taste endeavor to restore ancient simplicity.\*

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities in matter, seems now fully established. Heat and cold, smell and taste, though seeming to exist in bodies, are discovered to be effects caused by these bodies in a sensitive being: color, which appears to the eye as spread upon a substance, has no existence but in the mind of the spectator. Qualities of that kind, which owe their existence to the percipient as much as to the object, are termed *secondary* qualities, and are distinguished from figure, extension, solidity, which, in contradistinction to the former, are termed *primary* qualities, because they inhere in subjects whether perceived or not. This distinction suggests a curious inquiry, whether beauty be a primary or only a secondary quality of objects? The question is easily determined with respect to the beauty of color; for, if color be a secondary quality, existing no where but in the mind of the spectator, its beauty must exist there also. This conclusion equally holds with respect to the beauty of utility, which is plainly a conception of the mind, arising not from sight, but from reflecting that the thing is fitted for

\* A sprightly writer observes, "that the noble simplicity of the Augustan age was driven out by false taste; that the gigantic, the puerile, the quaint, and at last the barbarous and the monkish, had each their successive admirers: that music has become a science of tricks and slight of hand," &c.

some good end or purpose. The question is more intricate with respect to the beauty of regularity; for, if regularity be a primary quality, why not also its beauty? That this is not a good inference, will appear from considering, that beauty, in its very conception, refers to a percipient; for an object is said to be beautiful, for no other reason but that it appears so to a spectator: the same piece of matter that to a man appears beautiful, may possibly appear ugly to a being of a different species. Beauty, therefore, which for its existence depends on the percipient as much as on the object perceived, cannot be an inherent property in either. And hence it is wittily observed by the poet, that beauty is not in the person beloved, but in the lover's eye. This reasoning is solid; and the only cause of doubt or hesitation is, that we are taught a different lesson by sense: a singular determination of nature makes us perceive both beauty and color as belonging to the object, and, like figure or extension, as inherent properties. This mechanism is uncommon; and, when nature, to fulfil her intention, prefers any singular method of operation, we may be certain of some final cause that cannot be reached by ordinary means. For the beauty of some objects we are indebted entirely to nature; but, with respect to the endless variety of objects that owe their beauty to art and culture, the perception of beauty greatly promotes industry; being to us a strong additional incitement to enrich our fields, and improve our manufactures. These, however, are but slight effects, compared with the connections that are formed among individuals in society by means of this singular mechanism: the qualifications of the head and heart form, undoubtedly, the most solid and most permanent connections; but external beauty, which lies more in view, has a more extensive influence in forming these connections: at any rate, it concurs in an eminent degree with mental qualifications to produce social intercourse, mutual good-will, and consequently mutual aid and support, which are the life of society.

It must not, however, be overlooked, that the perception of beauty does not, when immoderate, tend to advance the interests of society. Love, in particular, arising from a perception of beauty, loses, when excessive, its sociable character: the appetite for gratification prevailing over affection for the beloved object, is ungovernable; and tends violently to its end, regardless of the misery that must follow. Love, in that state, is no longer a sweet agreeable passion: it becomes painful, like hunger or thirst; and produces no happiness but in the instant of fruition. This discovery suggests a most important lesson; that moderation in our desires and appetites, which fits us for doing our duty, contributes at the same time the most to happiness: even social passions, when moderate, are more pleasant than when they swell beyond proper bounds.

## CHAP. IV.

## GRANDEUR AND SUBLIMITY.

The mind of man attached to things great and elevated—Elevation of an object affects us as well as magnitude—The effect of a great object; and also of an elevated one—Emotions produced by great and elevated objects, are grandeur and sublimity—Greatness, considered abstractly, is agreeable—Regularity, proportion, order, and color, assist in causing grandeur—Greatness distinguishes grandeur from beauty—Difference between an emotion of grandeur and of beauty—The former is serious, the latter gay and weak—Regularity, proportion, and order, not so essential to grandeur as to beauty—Not so distinctly perceived in a great as in a small object—The mind occupied with the capital parts—These observations applied to sublimity—An agreeable object made sublime by placing it high—Littleness and lowness of place not disagreeable, are indifferent—If they were agreeable, greatness and elevation would not be so—a mental progression from less to greater, more agreeable than from greater to less—Grandeur and sublimity figurative—These terms applicable to persons and characters—The same in music—An ascending series of thought, or climax, agreeable—The grandest emotion is when the whole object is seen at one view—The sublime may be carried too far—The effort is too great; and it is difficult to descend—Grandeur in manner, consists in presenting the most important circumstances—A good description often affects more than a real view—Abstract terms to be avoided—An emotion of grandeur raised by reiterated impressions—Grandeur indirectly applied, depresses the mind—The bombast—Imaginary beings, without propriety of action.

NATURE has not more remarkably distinguished us from other animals by an erect posture, than by a capacious and aspiring mind, attaching us to things great and elevated. The ocean, the sky, seize the attention, and make a deep impression: \* robes of state are made large and full, to draw respect: we admire an elephant for its magnitude, notwithstanding its unwieldiness.

The elevation of an object affects us no less than its magnitude: a high place is chosen for the statue of a deity or hero: a tree growing on the brink of a precipice looks charming when viewed from the plain below: a throne is erected for the chief magistrate; and a chair with a high seat for the president of a court. Among all nations, heaven is placed far above us, hell far below us.

In some objects, greatness and elevation concur to make a complicated impression: the Alps and the Peak of Teneriffe are proper examples; with the following difference, that in the former greatness seems to prevail, elevation in the latter.

The emotions raised by great and by elevated objects, are clearly distinguishable, not only in internal feeling, but even in their external expressions. A great object makes the spectator endeavor to enlarge his bulk; which is remarkable in plain people, who give way to nature without reserve; in describing a great object, they naturally expand themselves by drawing in air with all their

\* Longinus observes, that nature inclines us to admire, not a small rivulet, however clear and transparent, but the Nile, the Ister, the Rhine, or still more the ocean. The sight of a small fire produces no emotion; but we are struck with the boiling furnaces of *Ætna*, pouring out whole rivers of liquid flame. *Treatise of the Sublime*, chap. 29.

force. An elevated object produces a different expression; it makes the spectator stretch upward, and stand a-tiptoe.

Great and elevated objects considered with relation to the emotions produced by them, are termed *grand* and *sublime*. *Grandeur* and *sublimity* have a double signification: they commonly signify the quality or circumstance in objects by which the emotions of grandeur and sublimity are produced; sometimes the emotions themselves.

In handling the present subject, it is necessary that the impression made on the mind by the magnitude of an object, abstracting from its other qualities, should be ascertained. And because abstraction is a mental operation of some difficulty, the safest method for judging is, to choose a plain object that is neither beautiful nor deformed, if such a one can be found. The plainest that occurs, is a huge mass of rubbish, the ruins, perhaps, of some extensive building, or a large heap of stones, such as are collected together for keeping in memory a battle or other remarkable event. Such an object, which in miniature would be perfectly indifferent, makes an impression by its magnitude, and appears agreeable. And supposing it so large, as to fill the eye, and to prevent the attention from wandering upon other objects, the impression it makes will be so much the deeper.\*

But, though a plain object of that kind be agreeable, it is not termed *grand*: it is not entitled to that character, unless, together with its size, it be possessed of other qualities that contribute to beauty, such as regularity, proportion, order, or color: and according to the number of such qualities combined with magnitude, it is more or less grand. Thus, St. Peter's church at Rome, the great pyramid of Egypt, the Alps towering above the clouds, a great arm of the sea, and, above all, a clear and serene sky, are grand, because, beside their size, they are beautiful in an eminent degree. On the other hand, an overgrown whale, having a disagreeable appearance, is not grand. A large building, agreeable by its regularity and proportions, is grand, and yet a much larger building destitute of regularity, has not the least tincture of grandeur. A single regiment in battle array, makes a grand appearance; which the surrounding crowd does not, though perhaps ten for one in number. And a regiment where the men are all in one livery, and the horses of one color, makes a grander appearance, and consequently strikes more terror, than where there is confusion of colors and of dress. Thus greatness or magnitude is the circumstance that distinguishes grandeur from beauty: agreeableness is the genus, of which beauty and grandeur are species.

The emotion of grandeur, duly examined, will be found an additional proof of the foregoing doctrine. That this emotion is pleasant in a high degree, requires no other evidence than once to have seen a grand object; and if an emotion of grandeur be pleasant, its cause or object, as observed above, must infallibly be agreeable in proportion.

The qualities of grandeur and beauty are not more distinct, than the emotions are which these qualities produce in a spectator. It is

\* See Appendix, Terms defined, sect. 33.



observed in the chapter immediately foregoing, that all the various emotions of beauty have one common character, that of sweetness and gaiety. The emotion of grandeur has a different character: a large object that is agreeable, occupies the whole attention, and swells the heart into a vivid emotion, which, though extremely pleasant, is rather serious than gay. And this affords a good reason for distinguishing in language these different emotions. The emotions raised by color, by regularity, by proportion, and by order, have such a resemblance to each other, as readily to come under one general term, *viz. the emotion of beauty*; but the emotion of grandeur is so different from these mentioned, as to merit a peculiar name.

Though regularity, proportion, order, and color, contribute to grandeur as well as to beauty, yet these qualities are not by far so essential to the former as to the latter. To make out that proposition, some preliminaries are requisite. In the first place, the mind, not being totally occupied with a small object, can give its attention at the same time to every minute part; but in a great or extensive object, the mind being totally occupied with the capital and striking parts, has no attention left for those that are little or indifferent. In the next place, two similar objects appear not similar when viewed at different distances; the similar parts of a very large object, cannot be seen but at different distances; and for that reason, its regularity, and the proportion of its parts, are, in some measure, lost to the eye; neither are the irregularities of a very large object so conspicuous as of one that is small. Hence it is, that a large object is not so agreeable by its regularity, as a small object; nor so disagreeable by its irregularities.

These considerations make it evident, that grandeur is satisfied with a less degree of regularity and of the other qualities mentioned, than is requisite for beauty; which may be illustrated by the following experiment. Approaching to a small conical hill, we take an accurate survey of every part, and are sensible of the slightest deviation from regularity and proportion. Supposing the hill to be considerably enlarged, so as to make us less sensible of its regularity, it will, upon that account, appear less beautiful. It will not, however, appear less agreeable, because some slight emotion of grandeur comes in place of what is lost in beauty. And at last, when the hill is enlarged to a great mountain, the small degree of beauty that is left, is sunk in its grandeur. Hence it is, that a towering hill is delightful, if it have but the slightest resemblance of a cone; and a chain of mountains no less so, though deficient in the accuracy of order and proportion. We require a small surface to be smooth; but in an extensive plain, considerable inequalities are overlooked. In a word, regularity, proportion, order, and color, contribute to grandeur as well as to beauty; but with a remarkable difference, that, in passing from small to great, they are not required in the same degree of perfection. This remark serves to explain the extreme delight we have in viewing the face of nature, when sufficiently enriched and diversified with objects. The bulk of the objects in a natural landscape are beautiful, and some of them grand:



a flowing river, a spreading oak, a round hill, an extended plain, are delightful; and even a rugged rock or barren heath, though in themselves disagreeable, contribute, by contrast, to the beauty of the whole. Joining to these, the verdure of the fields, the mixture of light and shade, and the sublime canopy spread over all; it will not appear wonderful, that so extensive a group of splendid objects should swell the heart to its utmost bounds, and raise the strongest emotion of grandeur. The spectator is conscious of an enthusiasm, which cannot bear confinement, nor the strictness of regularity and order: he loves to range at large; and is so enchanted with magnificent objects, as to overlook slight beauties or deformities.

The same observation is applicable, in some measure, to works of art: in a small building, the slightest irregularity is disagreeable; but, in a magnificent palace, or a large Gothic church, irregularities are less regarded: in an epic poem we pardon many negligences that would not be permitted in a sonnet or epigram. Notwithstanding such exceptions, it may be justly laid down for a rule, that in works of art, order and regularity ought to be governing principles: and hence the observation of Longinus,\* "In works of art we have regard to exact proportion; in those of nature, to grandeur and magnificence."

The same reflections are, in a good measure, applicable to sublimity; particularly, that, like grandeur, it is a species of agreeableness; that a beautiful object placed high, appearing more agreeable than formerly, produces in the spectator a new emotion, termed *the emotion of sublimity*; and that the perfection of order, regularity, and proportion, is less required in objects placed high, or at a distance, than at hand.

The pleasant emotion raised by large objects, has not escaped the poets

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He doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs. *Julius Caesar, Act I. Sc. 3.*

*Cleopatra.* I dreamt there was an Emp'ror Antony;  
Oh such another sleep, that I might see  
But such another man!  
His face was as the heavens: and therein stuck  
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted  
The little O o' th' earth.  
His legs bestrid the ocean, his rear'd arm  
Crested the world. *Antony and Cleopatra, Act V. Sc. 3.*

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Majesty  
Dies not alone, but, like a gulph, doth draw  
What's near it with it. It's a massy wheel  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount;  
To whose huge spokes, ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which when it falls,  
Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boist'rous ruin. *Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 8.*

The poets have also made good use of the emotion produced by the elevated situation of an object:

Quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres,  
Sublimi feriam sidera vertice. *Horat. Carm. l. 1. Ode 1.*

Amongst the lyric bards let me be read,  
High as the stars shall rise my lofty head.

O thou ! the earthly author of my blood,  
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,  
Doth with a twofold vigor lift me up,  
To reach at victory above my head. *Richard II. Act I. Sc. 4.*

Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal  
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne.  
*Richard II. Act V Sc. 2.*

*Antony.* Why was I rais'd the meteor of the world,  
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travell'd,  
Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward;  
To be trod out by Cæsar? *Dryden, All for Love, Act I.*

The description of Paradise in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*,  
a fine illustration of the impression made by elevated objects :

So on he fares, and to the border comes  
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,  
Now nearer, crowns with her inclosure green,  
As with a rural mound, the champain head  
Of a steep wilderness; whose hairy sides  
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
Access deny'd; and overhead up grew  
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,  
Cedar and pine, and fir, and branching palm,  
A sylvan scene; and as the ranks ascend,  
Shade above shade, a woody theatre  
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops  
The verd'rous wall of Paradise up sprung;  
Which to our general sire gave prospect large  
Into his nether empire neighb'ring round.  
And higher than that wall a circling row  
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,  
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,  
Appear'd with gay enamel'd colors mix'd. *B. 4. l. 131.*

Though a grand object is agreeable, we must not infer that a little object is disagreeable; which would be unhappy for man, considering that he is surrounded with so many objects of that kind. The same holds with respect to place: a body placed high is agreeable; but the same body placed low, is not, by that circumstance, rendered disagreeable. Littleness and lowness of place are precisely similar in the following particular, that they neither give pleasure nor pain. And in this may visibly be discovered peculiar attention in fitting the internal constitution of man to his external circumstances. Were littleness and lowness of place agreeable, greatness and elevation could not be so: were littleness and lowness of place disagreeable, they would occasion perpetual uneasiness.

The difference between great and little with respect to agreeableness, is remarkably felt in a series, when we pass gradually from the one extreme to the other. A mental progress from the capital to the kingdom, from that to Europe—to the whole earth—to the planetary system—to the universe, is extremely pleasant: the heart swells, and the mind is dilated, at every step. The returning in an opposite direction is not positively painful, though our pleasure lessens at every step, till it vanishes into indifference: such a progress may sometimes produce pleasure of a different sort, which arises from

taking a narrower and narrower inspection. The same observation holds in a progress upward and downward. Ascent is pleasant, because it elevates us: but descent is never painful; it is for the most part pleasant from a different cause, that it is according to the order of nature. The fall of a stone from any height is extremely agreeable by its accelerated motion. I feel it pleasant to descend from a mountain, because the descent is natural and easy. Neither is looking downward painful; on the contrary, to look down upon objects makes part of the pleasure of elevation: looking down becomes then only painful when the object is so far below as to create dizziness; and even when that is the case, we feel a sort of pleasure mixed with pain. Witness Shakspeare's description of Dover cliffs:

————— How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eye so low!

The crows and choughs, that wing the midway-air,

Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half-way down

Hangs one that gathers samphire; dreadful trade!

Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.

The fishermen that walk upon the beach,

Appear like mice; and yon tall anchoring bark

Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy

Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,

That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,

Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,

Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight

Topple down headlong.

*King Lear*, Act IV. Sc. 6.

A remark is made above, that the emotions of grandeur and sublimity are nearly allied; and hence it is, that the one term is frequently put for the other. An increasing series of numbers, for example, producing an emotion similar to that of mounting upward, is commonly termed *an ascending series*: a series of numbers gradually decreasing, producing an emotion similar to that of going downward, is commonly termed *a descending series*: we talk familiarly of going *up* to the capital, and of going *down* to the country: from a lesser kingdom we talk of going *up* to a greater; whence the *anabasis* in the Greek language, when one travels from Greece to Persia. We discover the same way of speaking in the language even of Japan;\* and its universality proves it the offspring of a natural feeling.

The foregoing observation leads us to consider grandeur and sublimity in a figurative sense, and as applicable to the fine arts. Hitherto these terms have been taken in their proper sense, as applicable to objects of sight only: and it was of importance to bestow some pains upon that article; because, generally speaking, the figurative sense of a word is derived from its proper sense, which holds remarkably at present. Beauty in its original signification is confined to objects of sight; but, as many other objects, intellectual as well as moral, raise emotions resembling that of beauty, the resemblance of the effects prompts us to extend the term *beauty* to these objects. This equally accounts for the terms *grandeur* and *sublimity* taken in a figurative sense. Every motion, from whatever cause

\* Kempfer's History of Japan, b. 5. chap. 2.

it proceeds, that resembles an emotion of grandeur or elevation, is called by the same name: thus generosity is said to be an *elevated* emotion, as well as great courage; and that firmness of soul which is superior to misfortunes, obtains the peculiar name of *magnanimity*. On the other hand, every emotion that contracts the mind, and fixes it upon things trivial or of no importance, is termed *low*, by its resemblance to an emotion produced by a little or low object of sight: thus an appetite for trifling amusements is called a *low taste*. The same terms are applied to characters and actions: we talk familiarly of an *elevated* genius, of a *great* man, and equally so of *littleness* of mind: some actions are *great* and *elevated*, and others are *little* and *grovelling*. Sentiments, and even expressions, are characterised in the same manner: an expression or sentiment that raises the mind is denominated *great* or *elevated*; and hence the *SUBLIME*\* in poetry. In such figurative terms, we lose the distinction between *great* and *elevated* in their proper sense; for the resemblance is not so entire as to preserve these terms distinct in their figurative application. We carry this figure still farther. Elevation in its proper sense, imports superiority of place; and lowness, inferiority of place: and hence a man of *superior* talents, of *superior* rank, of *inferior* parts, of *inferior* taste, and such like. The veneration we have for our ancestors, and for the ancients in general, being similar to the emotion produced by an elevated object of sight, justifies the figurative expression, of the ancients being *raised* above us, or possessing a *superior* place. And we may remark in passing, that as words are intimately connected with ideas, many, by this form of expression, are led to conceive their ancestors as really above them in place, and their posterity below them:

A grandam's name is little less in love,  
Than is the doting title of a mother:  
They are as children but one step below.

*Richard III. Act IV. Sc. 5.*

The notes of the gamut, proceeding regularly from the blunter or grosser sounds to the more acute and piercing, produce, in the hearer, a feeling somewhat similar to what is produced by mounting upward; and this gives occasion to the figurative expressions, a *high note*, a *low note*.

Such is the resemblance in feeling between real and figurative grandeur, that among the nations on the east coast of Afric, who are directed purely by nature, the officers of state are, with respect to rank,

\* Longinus gives a description of the Sublime that is not amiss, though far from being just in every circumstance, "That the mind is elevated by it, and so sensibly affected, as to swell in transport and inward pride, as if what is only heard or read, were its own invention." But he adheres not to this description; in his 6th chapter, he justly observes, that many passions have nothing of the grand, such as grief, fear, pity, which depress the mind instead of raising it; and yet, in chap. 8. he mentions Sappho's ode upon love as sublime: beautiful it is undoubtedly, but it cannot be sublime, because it really depresses the mind instead of raising it. His translator Boileaux is not more successful in his instances. In his 10th reflection, he cites a passage from Demosthenes and another from Herotus as sublime, which have not the least tincture of that quality.

distinguished by the length of the baton each carries in his hand: and in Japan, princes and great lords show their rank by the length and size of their sedan-poles.\* Again, it is a rule in painting, that figures of a small size are proper for grotesque pieces; but that an historical subject, grand and important, requires figures as great as the life. The resemblance of these feelings is in reality so strong, that elevation, in a figurative sense, is observed to have the same effect, even externally, with real elevation:

*K. Henry.* This day is called the feast of Crispian.  
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,  
Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is nam'd,  
And rouse him in the name of Crispian.

*Henry V. Act IV. Sc. 8.*

The resemblance, in feeling, between real and figurative grandeur, is humorously illustrated by Addison in criticising upon English tragedy: "The ordinary method of making an hero, is to clap a huge plume of feathers upon his head, which rises so high, that there is often a greater length from his chin to the top of his head, than to the sole of his foot. One would believe, that we thought a great man and a tall man the same thing. As these superfluous ornaments upon the head make a great man, a princess generally receives her grandeur from these additional encumbrances that fall into her tail: I mean the broad sweeping train, that follows her in all her motions; and finds constant employment for a boy, who stands behind her to open and spread it to advantage."† The Scythians impressed with the fame of Alexander, were astonished when they found him a little man.

A gradual progress from small to great is no less remarkable in figurative, than in real grandeur or elevation. Every one must have observed the delightful effect of a number of thoughts or sentiments, artfully disposed like an ascending series, and making impressions deeper and deeper: such disposition of members in a period, is termed a *climax*.

Within certain limits, grandeur and sublimity produce their strongest effects, which lessen by excess as well as by defect. This is remarkable in grandeur and sublimity taken in their proper sense: the grandest emotion that can be raised by a visible object, is where the object can be taken in at one view; if so immense as not to be comprehended but in parts, it tends rather to distract than satisfy the mind:‡ in like manner, the strongest emotion produced by elevation, is where the object is seen distinctly; a greater elevation lessens in appearance the object, till it vanishes out of sight with its pleasant emotion. The same is equally remarkable in figurative grandeur and elevation, which shall be handled together, because as observed above, they are scarcely distinguishable. Sentiments

\* Spectator, No. 42.

† It is justly observed by Addison, that perhaps a man would have been more astonished with the majestic air that appeared in one of Lysippus's statues of Alexander, though no bigger than the life, than he might have been with Mount Athos, had it been cut into the figure of the hero, according to the proposal of Phidias, with a river in one hand, and a city in the other. Spectator, No. 415.

may be so strained as to become obscure, or to exceed the capacity of the human mind. Against such license of imagination, every good writer will be upon his guard; and therefore it is of greater importance to observe, that even the true sublime may be carried beyond that pitch which produces the highest entertainment. We are undoubtedly susceptible of a greater elevation than can be inspired by human actions, the most heroic and magnanimous: witness what we feel from Milton's description of superior beings; yet every man must be sensible of a more constant and sweet elevation, when the history of his own species is the subject: he enjoys an elevation equal to that of the greatest hero, of an Alexander or a Cæsar, of a Brutus, or an Epaminondas; he accompanies these heroes in their sublimest sentiments and most hazardous exploits, with a magnanimity equal to theirs; and finds it no stretch, to preserve the same tone of mind, for hours together, without sinking. The case is not the same in describing the actions or qualities of superior beings: the reader's imagination cannot keep pace with that of the poet; the mind, unable to support itself in a strained elevation, falls as from a height; and the fall is immoderate, like the elevation: where that effect is not felt, it must be prevented by some obscurity in the conception, which frequently attends the description of unknown objects. Hence the St. Francises, St. Dominics, and other tutelary saints, among the Roman Catholics. A mind unable to raise itself to the Supreme Being, self-existent and eternal, or to support itself in a strained elevation, finds itself more at ease in using the intercession of some saint, whose piety and penances while on earth, are supposed to have made him a favorite in heaven.

A strained elevation is attended with another inconvenience, that the author is apt to fall suddenly as well as the reader; because it is not a little difficult, to descend sweetly and easily from such elevation, to the ordinary tone of the subject. The following passage is a good illustration of that observation:

Sæpe etiam immensum cœlo venit agmen aquarum,  
Et fœdam glomerant tempestatem imbris atris  
Conlectæ ex alto nubes. Ruit arduus æther,  
Et pluvia ingenti sata læta boumque labores  
Diluit. Implentur fossæ, et cava flumina crescunt  
Cum sonitu, fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.  
Ipse Pater, media nimborum in nocte, coruscâ  
Fulmina molitur dextra. Quo maxima motu  
Terra tremit: fugere feræ, et mortalia corda  
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor. Ille flagranti  
Aut Atho, aut Rodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo  
Dejicit: *ingeminant austri, et densissimus imber.*

*Virg. Georg. l. 1.*

And oft whole sheets descend of sluicy rain,  
Suck'd by the spongy clouds from off the main—  
The lofty skies at once come pouring down,  
The promised crop and golden labors drown.  
The dikes are filled; and with a roaring sound,  
The rising rivers float the nether ground—  
And rocks the bellowing voice of boiling seas rebound.  
The father of the gods his glory shrouds,  
Involved in tempests and a night of clouds;

And from the middle darkness flashing out,  
 By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.  
 Earth feels the motions of her angry god ;  
 Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod—  
 And flying beasts in forests seek abode.  
 Deep horror seizes every human breast,  
 Their pride is humbled and their fear confessed,  
 While he from high his rolling thunder throws,  
 And fires the mountains with repeated blows :  
 The rocks are from their old foundations rent,  
 The winds redouble and the rains augment—  
 The waves on heaps are dashed against the shore,  
 And now the woods and now the billows roar !

In the description of a storm, to figure Jupiter throwing down huge mountains with his thunder-bolts, is hyperbolically sublime, if I may use the expression : the tone of mind produced by that image is so distant from the tone produced by a thick shower of rain, that the sudden transition must be unpleasant.

Objects of sight that are not remarkably great nor high, scarcely raise any emotion of grandeur or of sublimity : and the same holds in other objects ; for we often find the mind roused and animated, without being carried to that height. This difference may be discerned in many sorts of music, as well as in some musical instruments ; a kettle-drum rouses, and a hautboy is animating ; but neither of them inspires an emotion of sublimity : revenge animates the mind in a considerable degree ; but I think it never produces an emotion that can be termed *grand* or *sublime* ; and I shall have occasion afterward to observe, that no disagreeable passion ever has that effect. I am willing to put this to the test, by placing before my reader a most spirited picture of revenge : it is a speech of Antony wailing over the body of Cæsar :

Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood !  
 Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,  
 (Which like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,  
 To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue,)  
 A curse shall light upon the kind of men ;  
 Domestic fury, and fierce civil strife,  
 Shall cumber all the parts of Italy ;  
 Blood and destruction shall be so in use,  
 And dreadful objects so familiar,  
 That mothers shall but smile, when they behold  
 Their infants quarter'd by the hands of war.  
 All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds,  
 And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,  
 With *Atè* by his side come hot from hell,  
 Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,  
 Cry, *Havock!* and let slip the dogs of war.

*Julius Cæsar*, Act III. Sc. 4.

No desire is more universal than to be exalted and honored ; and upon that account chiefly are we ambitious of power, riches, titles, fame, which would suddenly lose their relish, did they not raise us above others, and command submission and deference ;\* and it may

\* *Honestum per se esse expetendum indicant pueri, in quibus, ut in speculis, natura cernitur. Quanta studia decertantium sunt! Quanta ipsa certamina! Ut illi efferuntur lætitia, cum vicerunt! Ut pudet victos! Ut se accusari nolunt!*



be thought that our attachment to things grand and lofty proceeds from their connection with our favorite passion. This connection has undoubtedly an effect ; but that the preference given to things grand and lofty must have a deeper root in human nature, will appear from considering, that many bestow their time upon low and trifling amusements, without having the least tincture of this favorite passion : yet these very persons talk the same language with the rest of mankind, and prefer the more elevated pleasures : they acknowledge a more refined taste, and are ashamed of their own as low and grovelling. This sentiment, constant and universal, must be the work of nature ; and it plainly indicates an original attachment in human nature to every object that elevates the mind : some men may have a greater relish for an object not of the highest rank ; but they are conscious of the preference given by mankind in general to things grand and sublime ; and they are sensible that their peculiar taste ought to yield to the general taste.

What is said above suggests a capital rule for reaching the sublime in such works of art as are susceptible of it ; and that is, to present those parts or circumstances only which make the greatest figure, keeping out of view every thing low or trivial ; for the mind, elevated by an important object, cannot, without reluctance, be forced down to bestow any share of its attention upon trifles. Such judicious selection of capital circumstances, is by an eminent critic styled *grandeur of manner*.\* In none of the fine arts is there so great scope for that rule as in poetry ; which, by that means, enjoys a remarkable power of bestowing upon objects and events an air of grandeur : when we are spectators, every minute object presents itself in its order ; but, in describing at second hand, these are laid aside, and the capital objects are brought close together. A judicious taste in thus selecting the most interesting incidents, to give them an united force, accounts for a fact that may appear surprising ; which is, that we are more moved by a spirited narrative at second hand, than by being spectators of the event itself, in all its circumstances.

Longinus exemplifies the foregoing rule by a comparison of two passages.† The first, from Aristæus, is thus translated :

Ye pow'rs, what madness ! how on ships so frail  
(Tremendous thought !) can thoughtless mortals sail ?  
For stormy seas they quit the pleasing plain,  
Plant woods in waves, and dwell amidst the main.  
Far o'er the deep (a trackless path) they go,  
And wander oceans in pursuit of wo.  
No ease their hearts, no rest their eyes can find,  
On heaven their looks, and on the waves their mind.

Ut cupiunt laudari ! Quos illi labores non perferunt, ut æqualium principes sint !  
*Cicero de finibus.*

Boys show that honor is worthy to be sought for ; in whom, as in a mirror, we see nature. How zealous are the contenders ! How great are their contests ! How exalted with joy are the conquerors—how ashamed are the conquered ! How unwilling to be blamed ; how desirous of praise ! What labors do they not undergo to surpass their equals !

\* Spectator, No. 415.

Sunk are their spirits, while their arms they rear,  
And gods are wearied with their fruitless prayer.

The other, from Homer, I shall give in Pope's translation :

Burst as a wave that from the cloud impends,  
And swell'd with tempests on the ship descends.  
White are the decks with foam : the winds aloud  
Howl o'er the masts, and sing through every shroud.  
Pale, trembling, tir'd, the sailors freeze with fears,  
And instant death on every wave appears.

In the latter passage, the most striking circumstances are selected to fill the mind with terror and astonishment. The former is a collection of minute and low circumstances, which scatter the thought, and make no impression : it is, at the same time, full of verbal antitheses and low conceit, extremely improper in a scene of distress. But this last observation belongs to another head.

The following description of a battle is remarkably sublime, by collecting together, in the fewest words, those circumstances which make the greatest figure.

Like Autumn's dark storms pouring from two echoing hills, toward each other approached the heroes : as two dark streams from high rocks meet and roar on the plain, loud, rough, and dark in battle, meet Lochlin and Inisfail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man : steel sounds on steel, and helmets are cleft on high : blood bursts and smokes around : strings murmur on the polish'd yew : darts rush along the sky : spears fall like sparks of flame that gild the stormy face of night.

As the noise of the troubled ocean when roll the waves on high, as the last peal of thundering heaven, such is the noise of battle. Tho' Cormac's hundred bards were there, feeble were the voice of a hundred bards to send the deaths to future times ; for many were the deaths of the heroes, and wide poured the blood of the valiant.

*Fingal.*

The following passage in the 4th book of the Iliad, is a description of a battle, wonderfully ardent. " When now gathered on either side, the hosts plunged together in fight ; shield is harshly laid to shield, spears crash on the brazen corslets ; bossy buckler with buckler meets ; loud tumult rages over all ; groans are mixed with boasts of men : the slain and slayer join in noise ; the earth is floating round with blood. As when two rushing streams from two mountains come roaring down, and throw together their rapid waters below, they roar along the gulphy vale : The startled shepherd hears the sound, as he stalks o'er the distant hills : So, as they mixed in fight, from both armies clamor with loud terror arose." But such general descriptions are not frequent in Homer. Even his single combats are rare. The fifth book is the longest account of a battle that is in the Iliad ; and yet contains nothing but a long catalogue of chiefs killing chiefs, not in single combat neither, but at a distance, with an arrow or a javelin ; and these chiefs named for the first time and the last. The same scene is continued through a great part of the sixth book. There is, at the same time, a minute description of every wound, which for accuracy may do honor to an anatomist, but in an epic poem is tiresome and fatiguing. There is no relief from horrid languor but the beautiful Greek language, and melody of Homer's versification.

In the twenty-first book of the *Odyssey*, there is a passage which deviates widely from the rule above laid down: it concerns that part of the history of Penelope and her suitors, in which she is made to declare in favor of him who should prove the most dextrous in shooting with the bow of Ulysses:

Now gently winding up the fair ascent  
By many an easy step, the matron went:  
Then o'er the pavement glides with grace divine,  
(With polish'd oak the level pavements shine;)  
The folding gates a dazzling light display'd,  
With pomp of various architrave o'erlay'd.  
The bolt, obedient to the silken string,  
Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;  
The wards respondent to the key turn'd round  
The bars fall back; the flying valves resound.  
Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring;  
So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.  
She moves majestic through the wealthy room  
Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;  
There from the column where aloft it hung,  
Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung.

Virgil sometimes errs against this rule: in the following passages minute circumstances are brought into full view; and, what is still worse, they are described with all the pomp of poetical diction; *Æneid.* L. 1. l. 214. to 219. L. 6. l. 176. to 182. L. 6. l. 212, to 231.: and the last, which describes a funeral, is the less excusable, as the man whose funeral it is makes no figure in the poem.

The speech of Clytemnestra, descending from her chariot in the *Iphigenia* of Euripides,\* is stuffed with a number of common and trivial circumstances.

But of all writers, Lucan, as to this article, is the most injudicious. The sea-fight between the Romans and Massilians,† is described so much in detail, without exhibiting any grand or total view, that the reader is fatigued with endless circumstances, without ever feeling any degree of elevation; and yet there are some fine incidents, those for example of the two brothers, and of the old man and his son, which, taken separately, would affect us greatly. But Lucan, once engaged in a description, knows no end. See other passages of the same kind, L. 24. l. 292. to 337. L. 4. l. 750. to 765. The episode of the sorceress Erictho, end of book 6, is intolerably minute and prolix.

To these I venture to oppose a passage from an old historical ballad:

Go, little page, tell Hardiknute,  
That lives on hill so high,‡  
To draw his sword, the dread of foes,  
And haste to follow me.  
The little page flew swift as dart  
Flung by his master's arm.  
"Come down, come down, Lord Hardiknute,  
And rid your king from harm."

\* Beginning of Act 3.

† Lib. 3. beginning at line 567.

‡ *Higk*, in the old Scotch language, is pronounced *hac*.

This rule is also applicable to other fine arts. In painting it is established, that the principal figure must be put in the strongest light; that the beauty of attitude consists in placing the nobler parts most in view, and in suppressing the smaller parts as much as possible; that the folds of the drapery must be few and large; that fore shortenings are bad, because they make the parts appear little; and that the muscles ought to be kept as entire as possible, without being divided into small sections. Every one at present subscribes to that rule as applied to gardening, in opposition to parterres split into a thousand small parts in the stiffest regularity of figure. The most eminent architects have governed themselves by the same rule in all their works.

Another rule chiefly regards the sublime, though it is applicable to every sort of literary performance intended for amusement; and that is, to avoid, as much as possible, abstract and general terms. Such terms, similar to mathematical signs, are contrived to express our thoughts in a concise manner; but images, which are the life of poetry, cannot be raised in any perfection but by introducing particular objects. General terms that comprehend a number of individuals, must be excepted from that rule: our kindred, our clan, our country, and words of the like import, though they scarcely raise any image, have, however, a wonderful power over our passions: the greatness of the complex object overbalances the obscurity of the image.

Grandeur, being an extremely vivid emotion, is not readily produced in perfection but by reiterated impressions. The effect of a single impression can be but momentary; and if one feel suddenly somewhat like a swelling or exaltation of mind, the emotion vanishes as soon as felt. Single thoughts or sentiments, I know, are often cited as examples of the sublime; but their effect is far inferior to that of a grand subject displayed in its capital parts. I shall give a few examples, that the reader may judge for himself. In the famous action of Thermopylæ, where Leonidas the Spartan king, and his chosen band, fighting for their country, were cut off to the last man, a saying is reported of Diocæces, one of the band, which, expressing cheerful and undisturbed bravery, is well entitled to the first place in examples of that kind. Respecting the number of their enemies, it was observed, that the arrows shot by such a multitude would intercept the light of the sun. So much the better, says he, for we shall then fight in the shade.\*

*Somerset.* Ah! Warwick, Warwick, wert thou as we are,  
We might recover all our loss again.  
The Queen from France hath brought a puissant power,  
Ev'n now we heard the news. Ah! couldst thou fly!  
*Warwick.* Why, then I would not fly.

*Third Part Henry VI. Act V. Sc. 3.*

Such a sentiment from a man expiring of his wounds, is truly heroic, and must elevate the mind to the greatest height that can be done by a single expression: it will not suffer in a comparison with the fa

\* Herodotus, Book 7.

mous sentiment *Qu'il mourut* of Corneille: the latter is a sentiment of indignation merely, the former of firm and cheerful courage.

To cite in opposition many a sublime passage, enriched with the finest images, and dressed in the most nervous expressions, would scarcely be fair: I shall produce but one instance, from Shakspeare, which sets a few objects before the eye, without much pomp of language: it operates its effect by representing these objects in a climax, raising the mind higher and higher till it feel the emotion of grandeur in perfection:

The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve, &c.

*The cloud-capt tow'rs* produce an elevating emotion, heightened by the *gorgeous palaces*; and the mind is carried still higher and higher by the images that follow. Successive images, making thus deeper and deeper impressions, must elevate more than any single image can do.

As, on the one hand, no means directly applied have more influence to raise the mind than grandeur and sublimity; so, on the other, no means indirectly applied have more influence to sink and depress it: for in a state of elevation, the artful introduction of an humbling object, makes the fall great in proportion to the elevation. Of this observation Shakspeare gives a beautiful example, in the passage last quoted:

The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a rack behind.—

*Tempest*, Act IV. Sc. 4.

The elevation of the mind in the former part of this beautiful passage, makes the fall great in proportion, when the most humbling of all images is introduced, that of an utter dissolution of the earth and its inhabitants. The mind, when warmed, is more susceptible of impressions than in a cool state; and a depressing or melancholy object listened to, makes the strongest impression when it reaches the mind in its highest state of elevation or cheerfulness.

But a humbling image is not always necessary to produce that effect: a remark is made above, that, in describing superior beings, the reader's imagination, unable to support itself in a strained elevation, falls often as from a height, and sinks even below its ordinary tone. The following instance comes luckily in view; for a better cannot be given: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Longinus quotes this passage from Moses as a shining example of the sublime; and it is scarcely possible, in fewer words, to convey so clear an image of the infinite power of the Deity: but then it belongs to the present subject to remark, that the emotion of sublimity raised by this image is but momentary; and that the mind, unable to support itself in an elevation so much above nature, immediately sinks down into humility and veneration for a being so far

exalted above groveling mortals. Every one is acquainted with a dispute about that passage between two French critics,\* the one positively affirming it to be sublime, the other as positively denying. What I have remarked shows that both of them have reached the truth, but neither of them the whole truth: the primary effect of the passage is undoubtedly an emotion of grandeur; which so far justifies Boileau: but then every one must be sensible, that the emotion is merely a flash, which, vanishing instantaneously, gives way to humility and veneration. That indirect effect of sublimity justifies Huet, who, being a man of true piety, and probably not much carried by imagination, felt the humbling passion more sensibly than his antagonist did. And, laying aside difference of character, Huet's opinion may, I think, be defended as the more solid; because in such images, the depressing emotions are the more sensibly felt, and have the longer endurance.

The straining of an elevated subject beyond due bounds, is a vice not so frequent as to require the correction of criticism. But false sublime is a rock on which writers of more fire than judgment commonly split; and therefore a collection of examples may be of use as a beacon to future adventurers. One species of false sublime, known by the name of *bombast*, is common among writers of a mean genius: it is a serious endeavor, by strained description, to raise a low or familiar subject above its rank; which, instead of being sublime, becomes ridiculous. I am extremely sensible how prone the mind is, in some animating passions, to magnify its objects beyond natural bounds: but such hyperbolical description has its limits; and, when carried beyond the impulse of the propensity, it degenerates into burlesque. Take the following examples.

*Sejanus.* ————— Great and high  
The world knows only two, that's Rome and I.  
My roof receives me not; 'tis air I tread,  
And at each step I feel my advanc'd head  
Knock out a star in heav'n.

*Sejanus, Ben Johnson, Act V.*

A writer who has no natural elevation of mind, deviates readily into bombast: he strains above his natural powers; and the violent effort carries him beyond the bounds of propriety. Boileau expresses this happily:

L'autre à peur de ramper, il se perd dans la nue.†

The same author, Ben Johnson, abounds in the bombast:

————— The mother,  
Th' expulsed Apicata, finds them there;  
Whom when she saw lie spread on the degrees,  
After a world of fury on herself,  
Tearing her hair, defacing of her face,  
Beating her breasts and womb, kneeling amaz'd,  
Crying to heav'n, then to them; at last  
Her drowned voice got up above her woes:  
And with such black and bitter execrations,  
(As might affright the gods, and force the sun  
Run backward to the east; nay, make the old

\* Boileau and Huet.

† L'art Poet. chant. 1. l. 63.

Deformed chaos rise again t' o'erwhelm  
 Them, us, and all the world,) she fills the air.  
 Upbraids the heavens with their partial dooms,  
 Defies their tyrannous powers, and demands  
 What she and those poor innocents have transgress'd,  
 That they must suffer such a share in vengeance.  
*Sejanus, Act V. Sc. last.*

—————Lentulus, the man,  
 If all our fire were out, would fetch down new  
 Out of the hand of Jove; and rivet him  
 To Caucasus, should he but frown; and let  
 His own gaunt eagle fly at him to tire.  
*Cataline, Act III.*

Can these, or such, be any aid to us?  
 Look they as they were built to shake the world  
 Or be a moment to our enterprise?  
 A thousand, such as they are, could not make  
 One atom of our souls. They should be men  
 Worth heaven's fear, that looking up, but thus,  
 Would make Jove stand upon his guard, and draw  
 Himself within his thunder; which, amaz'd,  
 He should discharge in vain, and they unhurt.  
 Or, if they were, like Capaneus at Thebes,  
 They should hang dead upon the highest spires  
 And ask the second bolt to be thrown down.  
 Why Lentulus talk you so long? This time  
 Had been enough t'have scatter'd all the stars.  
 T'have quench'd the sun and moon, and made the world  
 Despair of day, or any light but ours.

*Cataline, Act IV.*

This is the language of a madman:

*Guildford.* Give way, and let the gushing torrent come,  
 Behold the tears we bring to swell the deluge,  
 Till the flood rise upon the guilty world  
 And make the ruin common.

*Lady Jane Gray, Act IV. near the end.*

I am sorry to observe that the following bombast stuff dropt from the pen of Dryden:

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,  
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;  
 And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,  
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

Another species of false sublime is still more faulty than bombast; and that is, to force elevation by introducing imaginary beings without preserving any propriety in their actions; as if it were lawful to ascribe every extravagance and inconsistency to beings of the poet's creation. No writers are more licentious in that article than Johnson and Dryden:

Methinks I see Death and the Furies waiting  
 What we will do, and all the heaven at leisure  
 For the great spectacle. Draw then your swords:  
 And if our destiny envy our virtue  
 The honor of the day, yet let us care  
 To sell ourselves at such a price, as may  
 Undo the world to buy us, and make Fate;  
 While she tempts ours, to fear her own estate.

*Cataline, Act V.*



—The Furies stood on hill  
 Circling the place, and trembled to see men  
 Do more than they; whilst Piety left the field,  
 Griev'd for that side, that in so bad a cause  
 They knew not what a crime their valor was.  
 The Sun stood still, and was, behind the cloud  
 The battle made, seen sweating to drive up  
 His frightened horse, whom still the noise drove backward.

*Ibid.* Act V.

*Osmyn.* While we indulge our common happiness,  
 He is forgot by whom we all possess,  
 The brave Almanzor, to whose arms we owe  
 All that we did, and all that we shall do;  
 Who like a tempest that outrides the wind,  
 Made a just battle ere the bodies join'd.

*Abdalla.* His victories we scarce could keep in view,  
 Or polish 'em so fast as he rough drew.

*Abdemelech.* Fate after him below with pain did move,  
 And Victory could scarce keep pace above.  
 Death did at length so many slain forget,  
 And lost the tale, and took 'em by the great.

*Conquest of Granada, Act II. at beginning.*

The gods of Rome fight for ye; loud Fame calls ye,  
 Pitch'd on the topless Appenine, and blows  
 To all the under world, all nations  
 The seas, and unfrequented deserts, where the snow dwells,  
 Wakens the ruin'd monuments, and there,  
 Where nothing but eternal death and sleep is,  
 Informs again the dead bones.

*Beaumont and Fletcher, Bonduca, Act III. Sc. 3.*

An actor on the stage may be guilty of bombast as well as an author in his closet; a certain manner of acting, which is grand when supported by dignity in the sentiment and force in the expression, is ridiculous where the sentiment is mean, and the expression flat.

This chapter shall be closed with some observations. When the sublime is carried to its due height, and circumscribed within proper bounds, it enchants the mind, and raises the most delightful of all emotions: the reader, engrossed by a sublime object, feels himself raised as it were to a higher rank. Considering that effect, it is not wonderful that the history of conquerors and heroes, should be universally the favorite entertainment. And this fairly accounts for what I once erroneously suspected to be a wrong bias originally in human nature; which is, that the grossest acts of oppression and injustice scarcely blemish the character of a great conqueror: we, nevertheless, warmly espouse his interest, accompany him in his exploits, and are anxious for his success: the splendour and enthusiasm of the hero transfused into the readers, elevate their minds far above the rules of justice, and render them, in a great measure, insensible of the wrongs that are committed:

For in those days might only shall be admir'd,  
 And valor and heroic virtue call'd;  
 To overcome in battle, and subdue  
 Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
 Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
 Of human glory, and for glory done

Of triumph, to be styl'd great conquerors,  
 Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods,  
 Destroyers rightlier call'd, and plagues of men.  
 Thus fame shall be achiev'd, renown on earth,  
 And what most merits fame in silence hid.

*Milton, b. ii.*

The irregular influence of grandeur reaches also to other matters: however good, honest, or useful, a man may be, he is not so much respected as is one of a more elevated character, though of less integrity; nor do the misfortunes of the former affect us so much as those of the latter. And I add, because it cannot be disguised, that the remorse which attends breach of engagement, is, in a great measure, proportioned to the figure that the injured person makes: the vows and protestations of lovers are an illustrious example; for these commonly are little regarded when made to women of inferior rank.

## CHAPTER V.

### MOTION AND FORCE.

**Motion is agreeable, rest, indifferent**—Motion agreeable, when it corresponds with the course of our perceptions—Quick motion at first agreeable—By accelerating the course of our perceptions, it becomes painful—Slow motion becomes painful by retarding our perceptions—Regular motion more agreeable than irregular—Motion uniformly accelerated, more agreeable than when uniformly retarded—Upward motion agreeable—Motion in a straight line agreeable—In curve lines more so—Two kinds of force; one quiescent, and one exerted in motion—To see them both exerted in motion is agreeable—The difference between the emotions excited by motion and those excited by force—Downward motion quiets the mind—Upward motion elevates the mind—The animating effect of great force—The final cause, to promote industry.

THAT motion is agreeable to the eye without relation to purpose or design, may appear from the amusement it gives to infants. juvenile exercises are relished chiefly on that account.

If a body in motion be agreeable, one will be apt to conclude that at rest it must be disagreeable: but we learn from experience, that this would be a rash conclusion. Rest is one of those circumstances that are neither agreeable nor disagreeable, being viewed with perfect indifferency. And happy is it for mankind to have the matter so ordered; if rest were agreeable, it would disincline us to motion, by which all things are performed: if it were disagreeable, it would be a source of perpetual uneasiness; for the bulk of the things we see, appear to be at rest. A similar instance of designing wisdom I have had occasion to explain, in opposing grandeur to littleness, and elevation to lowness of place.\* Even in the simplest matters, the finger of God is conspicuous: the happy adjustment of the internal nature of man to his external circumstances, displayed in the instances here given, is indeed admirable.

Motion is agreeable in all its varieties of quickness and slowness; but motion long continued admits some exceptions. That degree of

\* See Chap. 4.

continued motion which corresponds to the natural course of our perceptions, is the most agreeable. The quickest motion is for an instant delightful; but soon appears to be too rapid: it becomes painful by forcibly accelerating the course of our perceptions. Slow continued motion becomes disagreeable from an opposite cause, that it retards the natural course of our perceptions.\*

There are other varieties in motion, beside quickness and slowness, that make it more or less agreeable: regular motion is preferred before what is irregular; witness the motion of the planets in orbits nearly circular: the motion of the comets in orbits less regular, is less agreeable.

Motion uniformly accelerated, resembling an ascending series of numbers, is more agreeable than when uniformly retarded: motion upward is agreeable, by tendency to elevation. What then shall we say of downward motion regularly accelerated by the force of gravity, compared with upward motion regularly retarded by the same force? Which of these is the most agreeable? This question is not easily solved.

Motion in a straight line is agreeable: but we prefer undulating motion, as of waves, of a flame, of a ship under sail; such motion is more free, and also more natural. Hence the beauty of a serpentine river.

The easy and sliding motion of a fluid, from the lubricity of its parts, is agreeable upon that account; but the agreeableness chiefly depends on the following circumstance, that the motion is perceived, not as of one body, but as of an endless number moving together with order and regularity. Poets struck with that beauty, draw more images from fluids in motion than from solids.

Force is of two kinds; one quiescent, and one exerted in motion. The former, dead weight for example, must be laid aside; for a body at rest is not, by that circumstance, either agreeable or disagreeable. Moving force only is my province; and, though it is not separable from motion, yet by the power of abstraction, either of them may be considered independent of the other. Both of them are agreeable, because both of them include activity. It is agreeable to see a thing move: to see it moved, as when it is dragged or pushed along, is neither agreeable nor disagreeable, more than when at rest. It is agreeable to see a thing exert force; but it makes not the thing either agreeable or disagreeable, to see force exerted upon it.

Though motion and force are each of them agreeable, the impressions they make are different. This difference, clearly felt, is not easily described. All we can say is, that the emotion raised by a moving body, resembling its cause, is felt as if the mind were carried along: the emotion raised by force exerted, resembling also its cause, is felt as if force were exerted within the mind.

To illustrate that difference, I give the following examples. It has been explained why smoke ascending in a calm day, suppose from a cottage in a wood, is an agreeable object;† so remarkably agreeable,

\* This will be explained more fully afterward, ch. 9.

† Chap. 1.

that landscape-painters introduce it upon all occasions. The ascent being natural, and without effort, is pleasant in a calm state of mind. it resembles a gently-flowing river, but is more agreeable, because ascent is more to our taste than descent. A fire-work or a *jet d'eau* rouses the mind more; because the beauty of force visibly exerted, is superadded to that of upward motion. To a man reclining indolently upon a bank of flowers, ascending smoke in a still morning is charming; but a fire-work or a *jet d'eau* rouses him from that supine posture, and puts him in motion.

A *jet d'eau* makes an impression distinguishable from that of a waterfall. Downward motion being natural and without effort, tends rather to quiet the mind than to rouse it: upward motion, on the contrary, overcoming the resistance of gravity, makes an impression of a great effort, and thereby rouses and enlivens the mind.

The public games of the Greeks and Romans, which gave so much entertainment to the spectators, consisted chiefly in exerting force, wrestling, leaping, throwing great stones, and such-like trials of strength. When great force is exerted, the effort felt internally is animating. The effort may be such, as, in some measure, to overpower the mind: thus the explosion of gun-powder, the violence of a torrent, the weight of a mountain, and the crush of an earthquake, create astonishment rather than pleasure.

No quality nor circumstance contributes more to grandeur than force, especially where exerted by sensible beings. I cannot make the observation more evident than by the following quotations.

—————Him the almighty power  
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
In adamant chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.

*Paradise Lost*, book I.

—————Now storming fury rose,  
And clamor such as heard in heaven till now  
Was never; arms on armor clashing bray'd  
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss  
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
And flying vaulted either host with fire.  
So under fiery cope together rush'd  
Both battles main, with ruinous assault  
And inextinguishable rage; all heaven  
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth  
Had to her centre shook.

*Ibid.* book 6.

They ended parle, and both addressed for fight  
Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue  
Of angels, can relate, or to what things  
Likened on earth conspicuous, that may lift  
Human imagination to such height  
Of godlike pow'r? for likest gods they seem'd,  
Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms,  
Fit to decide the empire of great Heav'n.  
Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air  
Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields

Blaz'd opposite, while Expectation stood  
 In horror: from each hand with speed retir'd,  
 Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,  
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind  
 Of such commotion; such as, to set forth  
 Great things by small, if Nature's concord broke,  
 Among the constellations war were sprung,  
 Two planets, rushing from aspect malign  
 Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky  
 Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.

*Ibid.* book 6.

We shall next consider the effect of motion and force in conjunction. In contemplating the planetary system, what strikes us the most, is the spherical figures of the planets, and their regular motions; the conception we have of their activity and enormous bulk being more obscure: the beauty accordingly of that system, raises a more lively emotion than its grandeur. But if we could comprehend the whole system at one view, the activity and irresistible force of these immense bodies would fill us with amazement: nature cannot furnish another scene so grand.

Motion and force, agreeable in themselves, are also agreeable by their utility when employed as means to accomplish some beneficial end. Hence the superior beauty of some machines, where force and motion concur to perform the work of numberless hands. Hence the beautiful motions, firm and regular, of a horse trained for war: every single step is the fittest that can be, for obtaining the purposed end. But the grace of motion is visible chiefly in man, not only for the reasons mentioned, but because every gesture is significant. The power, however, of agreeable motion is not a common talent: every limb of the human body has an agreeable and disagreeable motion; some motions being extremely graceful, others plain and vulgar; some expressing dignity, others meanness. But the pleasure here, arising, not singly from the beauty of motion, but from indicating character and sentiment, belongs to different chapters.\*

I should conclude with the final cause of the relish we have for motion and force, were it not so evident as to require no explanation. We are placed here in such circumstances as to make industry essential to our well-being; for without industry the plainest necessities of life are not obtained. When our situation, therefore, in this world requires activity and a constant exertion of motion and force, Providence indulgently provides for our welfare by making these agreeable to us: it would be a gross imperfection in our nature, to make any thing disagreeable that we depend on for existence; and even indifference would slacken greatly that degree of activity which is indispensable

\* Chap. 11. and 15.

## CHAPTER VI

## NOVELTY, AND THE UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE OF OBJECTS.

The powerful effect of novelty in raising emotion—Wonder, the emotion raised by novelty—The difference between admiration and wonder—Wonder directed to an object; admiration to an agent—Novelty the cause of wonder; unexpectedness, of surprise—Wonder agreeable or disagreeable according to its cause—Surprise pleasant or painful, according to the object—The difference between the pleasures of novelty, and those of variety—Novelty springs from one source; variety from many—The lowest degree of novelty from a second survey of the object—The second, of objects of which we have had a description—The third, of new objects resembling a known species—The highest degree, from an unknown object, having no analogy to any thing with which we are acquainted—The prevalence of novelty among people of a mean taste—To arouse self-love in action in case of danger, the final cause of surprise.

Of all the circumstances that raise emotions, not excepting beauty, nor even greatness, novelty has the most powerful influence. A new object produces, instantaneously, an emotion termed *wonder*, which totally occupies the mind, and for a time excludes all other objects. Conversation among the vulgar never is more interesting than when it turns upon strange objects and extraordinary events. Men tear themselves from their native country in search of things rare and new; and novelty converts into a pleasure, the fatigues, and even perils of traveling. To what cause shall we ascribe these singular appearances? To curiosity undoubtedly, a principle implanted in human nature for a purpose extremely beneficial, that of acquiring knowledge; and the emotion of wonder, raised by new and strange objects, inflames our curiosity to know more of them. This emotion is different from *admiration*: novelty wherever found, whether in a quality or action, is the cause of wonder; admiration is directed to the person who performs any thing wonderful.

During infancy, every new object is probably the occasion of wonder, in some degree; because, during infancy, every object at first sight is strange as well as new: but as objects are rendered familiar by custom, we cease, by degrees, to wonder at new appearances, if they have any resemblance to what we are acquainted with: for a thing must be singular as well as new, to raise our wonder. To save multiplying words, I would be understood to comprehend both circumstances when I, hereafter, talk of novelty.

In an ordinary train of perceptions where one thing introduces another, not a single object makes its appearance unexpectedly: the mind thus prepared for the reception of its objects, admits them one after another without perturbation. But when a thing breaks in unexpectedly, and without the preparation of any connection, it raises an emotion, known by the name of *surprise*. That emotion may be produced by the most familiar object, as when one unexpectedly meets a friend who was reported to be dead; or a man in high life lately a beggar. On the other hand, a new object, however strange.

\* See Chap. 1.

will not produce the emotion, if the spectator be prepared for the sight: an elephant in India will not surprise a traveller who goes to see one; and yet its novelty will raise his wonder: an Indian in Britain would be much surprised to stumble upon an elephant feeding at large in the open fields: but the creature itself, to which he was accustomed, would not raise his wonder.

Surprise, thus, in several respects differs from wonder: unexpectedness is the cause of the former emotion; novelty is the cause of the latter. Nor differ they less in their nature and circumstances, as will be explained hereafter. With relation to one circumstance they perfectly agree; which is, the shortness of their duration: the instantaneous production of these emotions in perfection, may contribute to that effect, in conformity to a general law, that things soon decay which soon come to perfection: the violence of the emotions may also contribute; for an ardent emotion, which is not susceptible of increase, cannot have a long course. But their short duration is occasioned chiefly by that of their causes: we are soon reconciled to an object, however unexpected; and novelty soon degenerates into familiarity.

Whether these emotions be pleasant or painful, is not a clear point. It may appear strange, that our own feelings and their capital qualities, should afford any matter for a doubt: but when we are engrossed by any emotion, there is no place for speculation; and when sufficiently calm for speculation, it is not easy to recall the emotion with accuracy. New objects are sometimes terrible, sometimes delightful. The terror which a tiger inspires is greatest at first, and wears off gradually by familiarity: on the other hand, even women will acknowledge that it is novelty which pleases the most in a new fashion: It would be rash, however, to conclude, that wonder is in itself neither pleasant nor painful, but that it assumes either quality according to circumstances. An object, it is true, that has a threatening appearance, adds to our terror by its novelty: but from that experiment it does not follow, that novelty is in itself disagreeable; for it is perfectly consistent, that we be delighted with an object in one view, and terrified with it in another: a river in flood swelling over its banks, is a grand and delightful object; and yet it may produce no small degree of fear when we attempt to cross it: courage and magnanimity are agreeable; and yet, when we view these qualities in an enemy, they serve to increase our terror. In the same manner, novelty may produce two effects clearly distinguishable from each other: it may, directly and in itself, be agreeable; and it may have an opposite effect indirectly, which is, to inspire terror; for when a new object appears in any degree dangerous, our ignorance of its powers and qualities, affords ample scope for the imagination to dress it in the frightful colors.\* The first sight of a lion, for example, may at the same instant produce two opposite feelings, the pleasant emotion of wonder, and the painful passion of terror: the novelty of the object produces the former directly, and contributes to the latter indirectly. Thus, when the subject is analysed, we find, that the power which novelty has indirectly to inflame ter-

\* *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*, part 2. *ess.* 6.



ror, is perfectly consistent with its being, in every circumstance, agreeable. The matter may be put in the clearest light, by adding the following circumstances. If a lion be first seen from a place of safety, the spectacle is altogether agreeable without the least mixture of terror. If, again, the first sight puts us within reach of that dangerous animal, our terror may be so great as quite to exclude any sense of novelty. But this fact proves not that wonder is painful: it proves only, that wonder may be excluded by a more powerful passion. Every man may be made certain from his own experience, that wonder, raised by a new object which is inoffensive, is always pleasant; and with respect to offensive objects, it appears from the foregoing deduction, that the same must hold as long as the spectator can attend to the novelty.

Whether surprise be in itself pleasant or painful, is a question no less intricate than the former. It is certain that surprise inflames our joy when unexpectedly we meet with an old friend, and our terror when we stumble upon any thing noxious. To clear that question, the first thing to be remarked is, that in some instances an unexpected object overpowers the mind, so as to produce a momentary stupefaction: where the object is dangerous, or appears so, the sudden alarm it gives, without preparation, is apt totally to unhinge the mind, and for a moment to suspend all its faculties, even thought itself;\* in which state a man is quite helpless; and if he move at all, is as likely to run upon the danger as from it. Surprise carried to such a height, cannot be either pleasant or painful; because the mind, during such momentary stupefaction, is in a good measure, if not totally, insensible.

If we then inquire for the character of this emotion, it must be where the unexpected object or event produces less violent effects. And while the mind remains sensible of pleasure and pain, is it not natural to suppose, that surprise, like wonder, should have an invariable character? I am inclined, however, to think that surprise has no invariable character, but assumes that of the object which raises it. Wonder being an emotion invariably raised by novelty, and being distinguishable from all other emotions, ought naturally to possess one constant character. The unexpected appearance of an object seems not equally entitled to produce an emotion distinguishable from that which is produced by the object in its ordinary appearance: the effect it ought naturally to have, is only to swell that emotion, by making it more pleasant or more painful than it commonly is. And that conjecture is confirmed by experience, as well as by language, which is built upon experience: when a man meets a friend unexpectedly, he is said to be agreeably surprised; and when he meets an enemy unexpectedly, he is said to be disagreeably surprised. It appears, then, that the sole effect of surprise is to swell the emotion raised by the object. And that effect can be clearly explained: a tide of connected perceptions glide gently into the mind, and produce no perturbation; but an object breaking in unexpectedly, sounds an alarm, rouses the mind out of its calm state, and directs its whole

\* Hence the Latin names for surprise, *torpor*, *animi stupor*.

attention to the object, which, if agreeable, becomes doubly so. Several circumstances concur to produce that effect: on the one hand, the agitation of the mind, and its keen attention, prepare it, in the most effectual manner, for receiving a deep impression: on the other hand, the object, by its sudden and unforeseen appearance, makes an impression, not gradually as expected objects do, but as at one stroke with its whole force. The circumstances are precisely similar where the object is in itself disagreeable.\*

The pleasure of novelty is easily distinguished from that of variety: to produce the latter, a plurality of objects is necessary; the former arises from a circumstance found in a single object. Again, where objects, whether co-existent or in succession, are sufficiently diversified, the pleasure of variety is complete, though every single object of the train be familiar: but the pleasure of novelty, directly opposite to familiarity, requires no diversification.

There are different degrees of novelty, and its effects are in proportion. The lowest degree is found in objects surveyed a second time after a long interval; and that in this case an object takes on some appearance of novelty, is certain from experience: a large building of many parts variously adorned, or an extensive field embellished with trees, lakes, temples, statues, and other ornaments, will appear new oftener than once: the memory of an object so complex is soon lost, of its parts at least, or of their arrangement. But experience teaches, that even without any decay of remembrance, absence alone will give an air of novelty to a once familiar object; which is not surprising, because familiarity wears off gradually by absence: thus a person with whom we have been intimate, returning after a long interval, appears like a new acquaint-

\* What the Mareschal Saxe terms *le cœur humain* is no other than fear occasioned by surprise. It is owing to that cause that an ambush is generally so destructive: intelligence of it beforehand renders it harmless. The Mareschal gives from Cæsar's Commentaries two examples of what he calls *le cœur humain*. At the siege of Amiens by the Gauls, Cæsar came up with his army, which did not exceed 7000 men, and began to intrench himself in such hurry, that the barbarians, judging him to be afraid, attacked his intrenchments with great spirit. During the time they were filling up the ditch, he issued out with his cohorts; and, by attacking them unexpectedly, struck a panic that made them fly with precipitation, not a single man offering to make a stand. At the siege of Alesia, the Gauls, infinitely superior in number, attacked the Roman lines of circumvallation, in order to raise the siege. Cæsar ordered a body of his men to march out silently, and to attack them on the one flank, while he with another body did the same on the other flank. The surprise of being attacked when they expected a defence only, put the Gauls into disorder, and gave an easy victory to Cæsar.

A third may be added, no less memorable. In the year 846, an obstinate battle was fought between Xamire King of Leon, and Abdoulrahman the Moorish King of Spain. After a very long conflict, the night only prevented the Arabians from obtaining a complete victory. The King of Leon, taking advantage of the darkness, retreated to a neighboring hill, leaving the Arabians masters of the field of battle. Next morning, perceiving that he could not maintain his place for want of provisions, nor be able to draw off his men in the face of a victorious army, he rallied his men in order of battle, and, without losing a moment, marched to attack the enemy, resolving to conquer or die. The Arabians, astonished to be attacked by those who were conquered the night before, lost all heart: fear succeeded to astonishment, the panic was universal, and they all turned their backs almost without drawing a sword.

ance: and distance of place contributes to this appearance, no less than distance of time. A friend, for example, after a short absence in a remote country, has the same air of novelty as if he had returned after a longer interval from a place near home: the mind forms a connection between him and the remote country, and bestows upon him the singularity of the objects he has seen. For the same reason, when two things equally new and singular are presented, the spectator balances between them; but when told that one of them is the product of a distant quarter of the world, he no longer hesitates, but clings to it as the most singular. Hence the preference given to foreign luxuries, and to foreign curiosities, which appear rare in proportion to their original distance.

The next degree of novelty, mounting upward, is found in objects of which we have some information at second hand; for description, though it contribute to familiarity, cannot altogether remove the appearance of novelty when the object itself is presented: the first sight of a lion occasions some wonder, after a thorough acquaintance with the correctest pictures and statues of that animal.

A new object that bears some distant resemblance to a known species, is an instance of a third degree of novelty: a strong resemblance among individuals of the same species, prevents, almost entirely, the effect of novelty, unless distance of place or some other circumstance concur; but where the resemblance is faint, some degree of wonder is felt, and the emotion rises in proportion to the faintness of the resemblance.

The highest degree of wonder arises from unknown objects that have no analogy to any species with which we are acquainted. Shakespeare in a simile introduces that species of novelty:

As glorious to the sight  
As is a winged messenger from heaven  
Unto the white up-turned wond'ring eye  
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

*Romeo and Juliet.*

One example of that species of novelty deserves peculiar attention; and that is, when an object altogether new is seen by one person only, and but once. These circumstances heighten, remarkably, the emotion: the singularity of the spectator concurs with the singularity of the object, to inflame wonder to its highest pitch.

In explaining the effects of novelty, the place a being occupies in the scale of existence, is a circumstance that must not be omitted. Novelty in the individuals of a low class, is perceived with indifference, or with a very slight emotion: thus a pebble, however singular in its appearance, scarcely moves our wonder. The emotion rises with the rank of the object; and, other circumstances being equal, is strongest in the highest order of existence: a strange insect affects us more than a strange vegetable; and a strange quadruped more than a strange insect.

However natural novelty may be, it is a matter of experience, that

those who relish it the most are careful to conceal its influence. Love of novelty, it is true, prevails in children, in idlers, and in men of shallow understanding: and yet, after all, why should one be ashamed of indulging a natural propensity? A distinction will afford a satisfactory answer. No man is ashamed of curiosity when it is indulged in order to acquire knowledge. But to prefer any thing merely because it is new, shows a mean taste of which one ought to be ashamed: vanity is commonly at the bottom, which leads those who are deficient in taste to prefer things odd, rare, or singular, in order to distinguish themselves from others. And in fact, that appetite, as above mentioned, reigns chiefly among persons of a mean taste, who are ignorant of refined and elegant pleasures.

One final cause of wonder, hinted above, is, that this emotion is intended to stimulate our curiosity. Another, somewhat different, is, to prepare the mind for receiving deep impressions of new objects. An acquaintance with the various things that may affect us, and with their properties, is essential to our well-being: nor will a slight or superficial acquaintance be sufficient; they ought to be so deeply engraved on the mind, as to be ready for use upon every occasion. Now, in order to make a deep impression, it is wisely contrived, that things should be introduced to our acquaintance with a certain pomp and solemnity productive of a vivid emotion. When the impression is once fairly made, the emotion of novelty, being no longer necessary, vanishes almost instantaneously; never to return, unless, where the impression happens to be obliterated by length of time or other means; in which case, the second introduction has nearly the same solemnity that the first had.

Designing wisdom is no where more legible than in this part of the human frame. If new objects did not affect us in a very peculiar manner, their impressions would be so slight as scarcely to be of any use in life: on the other hand, did objects continue to affect us as deeply as at first, the mind would be totally engrossed with them, and have no room left, either for action or reflection.

The final cause of surprise is still more evident than of novelty. Self-love makes us vigilantly attentive to self-preservation; but self-love, which operates by means of reason and reflection, and impels not the mind to any particular object or from it, is a principle too cool for a sudden emergency: an object breaking in unexpectedly, affords no time for deliberation; and, in that case, the agitation of surprise comes in seasonably to rouse self-love into action: surprise gives the alarm; and if there be any appearance of danger, our whole force is instantly summoned up to shun or to prevent it.

## CHAPTER VII

## RISIBLE OBJECTS.

**Risible objects expressed externally by laughter—Ludicrous objects such as are playful or jocular—Trivial and unimportant objects only, risible—Works of nature and of art, risible only, when out of rule—Objects that are not risible—Risible emotions, except contempt, not produced when the mind is occupied—Objects which cause laughter, either risible or ridiculous—A risible object mirthful only; a ridiculous one, both mirthful and contemptible—The nature of the emotion raised by a risible object; and also of that raised by a ridiculous one.**

SUCH is the nature of man, that his powers and faculties are soon blunted by exercise. The returns of sleep, suspending all activity, are not alone sufficient to preserve him in vigor: during his waking hours, amusement by intervals is requisite to unbend his mind from serious occupation. To that end, nature has kindly made a provision of many objects, which may be distinguished by the epithet of *risible*, because they raise in us a peculiar emotion expressed externally by *laughter*: that emotion is pleasant; and being also mirthful, it most successfully unbends the mind, and recruits the spirits. Imagination contributes a part, by multiplying such objects without end.

*Ludicrous* is a general term, signifying, as may appear from its derivation, what is playsome, sportive, or jocular. *Ludicrous*, therefore, seems the genus, of which *risible* is a species, limited, as above, to what makes us laugh.

However easy it may be, concerning any particular object, to say whether it be risible or not, it seems difficult, if at all practicable, to establish any general character, by which objects of that kind may be distinguished from others. Nor is that a singular case; for, upon a review, we find the same difficulty in most of the articles already handled. There is nothing more easy, viewing a particular object, than to pronounce that it is beautiful or ugly, grand or little: but were we to attempt general rules for ranging objects under different classes, according to these qualities, we should be much gruelled. A separate cause increases the difficulty of distinguishing risible objects by a general character: all men are not equally affected by risible objects; nor the same man at all times; for in high spirits a thing will make him laugh outright, which scarcely provokes a smile in a grave mood. Risible objects, however, are circumscribed within certain limits; which I shall suggest, without pretending to accuracy. And, in the first place, I observe, that no object is risible but what appears slight, little, or trivial; for we laugh at nothing that is of importance to our own interest, or to that of others. A real distress raises pity, and therefore cannot be risible; but a slight or imaginary distress, which moves not pity, is risible. The adventure of the fulling-mills in Don Quixote, is extremely risible; so is the scene where Sancho, in a dark night, tumbling into a pit, and attaching himself to the side by hand and foot, hangs there in terrible

dismay till the morning, when he discovers himself to be within a foot of the bottom. A nose remarkably long or short, is risible; but to want it altogether, far from provoking laughter, raises horror in the spectator. Secondly, with respect to works both of nature and of art, none of them are risible but what are out of rule, some remarkable defect or excess; a very long visage, for example, or a very short one. Hence nothing just, proper, decent, beautiful, proportioned, or grand, is risible.

Even from this slight sketch it will readily be conjectured, that the emotion raised by a risible object is of a nature so singular, as scarcely to find place while the mind is occupied with any other passion or emotion: and the conjecture is verified by experience; for we scarcely ever find that emotion blended with any other. One emotion I must except; and that is, contempt raised by certain improprieties: every improper act inspires us with some degree of contempt for the author; and if an improper act be, at the same time, risible to provoke laughter, of which blunders and absurdities are noted instances, the two emotions of contempt and of laughter unite intimately in the mind, and produce externally what is termed *a laugh of derision* or *of scorn*. Hence objects that cause laughter may be distinguished into two kinds: they are either *risible* or *ridiculous*. A risible object is mirthful only: a ridiculous object is both mirthful and contemptible. The first raises an emotion of laughter that is altogether pleasant: the pleasant emotion of laughter raised by the other, is blended with the painful emotion of contempt; and the mixed emotion is termed *the emotion of ridicule*. The pain a ridiculous object gives me is resented and punished by a laugh of derision. A risible object, on the other hand, gives me no pain: it is altogether pleasant by a certain sort of titillation, which is expressed externally by mirthful laughter. Ridicule will be more fully explained afterward: the present chapter is appropriated to the other emotion.

Risible objects are so common, and so well understood, that it is unnecessary to consume paper or time upon them. Take the few following examples.

*Falstaff*. I do remember him at Clement's inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring. When he was naked, he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act III. Sc. 5.*

The foregoing is of disproportion. The following examples are of slight or imaginary misfortunes.

*Falstaff*. Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in't. Have I liv'd to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown into the Thames! Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i'th'litter; and you may know by my size, that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking: if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drown'd, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow; a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man: and what a thing should I have been when I had been swell'd? I should have been a mountain of mummy.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Sc.*



*Falstaff*. Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffer'd to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus cramm'd in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were call'd forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane. They took me on their shoulders, met the jealous knave their master in the door, who ask'd them once or twice what they had in their basket. I quak'd for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have search'd it; but Fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook. I suffer'd the pangs of three egregious deaths; first, an intolerable fright, to be detected by a jealous rotten bell-wether; next, to be compass'd like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and then to be stopt in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease. Think of that, a man of my kidney; think of that, that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw; it was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stew'd in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cool'd glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse shoe; think of that; hissing hot; think of that, Master Brook.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Sc. 5.*

## CHAPTER V. II.

### RESEMBLANCE AND DISSIMILITUDE.

The pleasure of discovering dissimilitude where resemblance prevails, and resemblance where dissimilitude prevails—A comparison carried too far, appears slight and trivial—Instruction the chief end of comparison—To present a thing in the strongest point of view, another end—The same effect produced by contrast—The similes of poets of taste drawn from things that differ from the principal subject—A contrast to be attempted, only when the things have a common genus, and a resemblance in their capital circumstance—Illustrated—The passions are inflamed by comparison—Illustrated—The influence of comparison on our opinions—A man in grief not able to bear mirth—Appearances of danger excite both pleasure and pain—Wonder, the cause of the effect produced by heightening or diminishing an object—Surprise makes the difference appear greater than it is—Things found to be more beautiful or strange than they were expected to be, are conceived to be more strange than they are—Cause for the effect of contrast and comparison—The principle on which it is founded—To induce the completion of works of art, the final cause—Resemblance too entire has no effect—Emotions make the greatest figure when contrasted in succession—Emotions raised by the fine arts, too nearly related to make a figure by resemblance—In a small garden, or painting, no dissimilarity of emotion to be produced—Wit and ridicule opposed to grandeur.

HAVING discussed those qualities and circumstances of single objects that seem peculiarly connected with criticism, we proceed, according to the method proposed in the chapter of beauty, to the relations of objects, beginning with the relations of resemblance and dissimilitude.

The connection that man has with the beings around him, requires some acquaintance with their nature, their powers and their qualities, for regulating his conduct. For acquiring a branch of knowledge so essential to our well-being, motives alone of reason and interest are not sufficient: nature has providently superadded curiosity, a vigorous propensity, which never is at rest. This propensity attaches



us to every new object;\* and incites us to compare objects, in order to discover their differences and resemblances.

Resemblance among objects of the same kind, and dissimilitude among objects of different kinds, are too obvious and familiar to gratify our curiosity in any degree: its gratification lies in discovering differences among things where resemblance prevails, and resemblances where difference prevails. Thus a difference in individuals of the same kind of plants or animals is deemed a discovery; while the many particulars in which they agree are neglected: and in different kinds, any resemblance is greedily remarked, without attending to the many particulars in which they differ.

A comparison, however, may be too far stretched. When differences or resemblances are carried beyond certain bounds, they appear slight and trivial; and for that reason will not be relished by a man of taste: yet such propensity is there to gratify passion, curiosity in particular, that even among good writers we find many comparisons too slight to afford satisfaction. Hence the frequent instances among logicians of distinctions without any solid difference: and hence the frequent instances among poets and orators, of similes without any just resemblance. With regard to the latter, I shall confine myself to one instance, which will probably amuse the reader, being a quotation, not from a poet nor orator, but from a grave author, writing an institute of law. "Our student shall observe, that the knowledge of the law is like a deep well, out of which each man draweth according to the strength of his understanding. He that reaches deepest, seeth the amiable and admirable secrets of the law, wherein I assure you the sages of the law in former times have had the deepest reach. And, as the bucket in the depth is easily drawn to the uppermost part of the water, (for *nullum elementum in suo proprio loco est grave*,) but take it from the water, it cannot be drawn up but with a great difficulty; so, albeit beginnings of this study seem difficult, yet, when the professor of the law can dive into the depth, it is delightful, easy, and without any heavy burden, so long as he keep himself in his own proper element."† Shakspeare, with uncommon humor, ridicules such disposition to simile-making, by putting in the mouth of a weak man a resemblance much of a piece with that now mentioned:

*Fluellen.* I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is born: I tell you, Captain, if you look in the maps of the orld, I warrant that you sall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon, there is also moreover a river in Monmouth: it is called *Wye* at Monmouth, but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but it is all one, 'tis as like as my fingers to my fingers, and there is salmons in both. If you mark Alexander's life well, Harry of Monmouth's life is come after it indifferent well; for there is figures in all things. Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his displeasures, and his indignations; and also being a little intoxicates in his prains, did, in his ales and his angers, look you, kill his pest friend Clytus.

*Gower.* Our King is not like him in that; he never kill'd any of his friends.

*Fluellen.* It is not well done, mark you now, to take the tales out of my mouth

\* See chap. 6.

† Coke upon Lyttleton, p. 71.

ere it is made and finished. I speak but in figures, and comparisons of it: As Alexander kill'd his friend Clytus, being in his ales and his cups; so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his good judgments, turn'd away the fat knight with the great belly doublet; he was full of jests, and gypes, and knaveries, and mocks: I have forgot his name.

*Gower.* Sir John Falstaff.

*Fluellen.* That is he: I tell you there is good men porn at Monmouth.

*K. Henry V.* Act IV. Sc. 13.

Instruction, no doubt, is the chief end of comparison; but that it is not the only end will be evident from considering, that a comparison may be employed with success to put a subject in a strong point of view. A lively idea is formed of a man's courage, by likening it to that of a lion; and eloquence is exalted in our imagination, by comparing it to a river overflowing its banks, and involving all in its impetuous course. The same effect is produced by contrast: a man in prosperity becomes more sensible of his happiness by opposing his condition to that of a person in want of bread. Thus, comparison is subservient to poetry as well as to philosophy; and, with respect to both, the foregoing observation holds equally, that resemblance among objects of the same kind, and dissimilitude among objects of different kinds, have no effect: such a comparison neither tends to gratify our curiosity, nor to set the objects compared in a stronger light: two apartments in a palace, similar in shape, size, and furniture, make, separately, as good a figure as when compared; and the same observation is applicable to two similar compartments in a garden: on the other hand, oppose a regular building to a fall of water, or a good picture to a towering hill, or even a little dog to a large horse, and the contrast will produce no effect. But a resemblance between objects of different kinds, and a difference between objects of the same kind, have remarkably an enlivening effect. The poets, such of them as have a just taste, draw all their similes from things that in the main differ widely from the principal subject; and they never attempt a contrast but where the things have a common genus and a resemblance in the capital circumstances: place together a large and a small sized animal of the same species, the one will appear greater, the other less, than when viewed separately: when we oppose beauty to deformity, each makes a greater figure by the comparison. We compare the dress of different nations with curiosity, but without surprise: because they have no such resemblance in the capital parts as to please us by contrasting the smaller parts. But a new cut of a sleeve or of a pocket enchants by its novelty, and in opposition to the former fashion, raises some degree of surprise.

That resemblance and dissimilitude have an enlivening effect upon objects of sight, is made sufficiently evident: and that they have the same effect upon objects of the other senses, is also certain. Nor is that law confined to the external senses: for characters contrasted make a greater figure by the opposition: Iago, in the tragedy of *Othello*, says,

He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes me ugly.

The character of a fop, and of a rough warrior, are no where more successfully contrasted than in Shakspeare :

*Hotspur.* My liege, I did deny no prisoners;  
But I remember, when the fight was done,  
When I was dry with rage, and extreme toil,  
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword;  
Came there a certain lord, neat trimly dress'd,  
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin, new-reap'd,  
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home.  
He was perfumed like a milliner;  
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held  
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon  
He gave his nose;—and still he smil'd, and talk'd  
And as the soldiers bare dead bodies by,  
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,  
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse  
Betwixt the wind and his nobility!  
With many holiday and lady terms  
He question'd me: among the rest demanded  
My pris'ners, in your Majesty's behalf.  
I then all smarting with my wounds; being gall'd  
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,  
Out of my grief, and my impatience,  
Answer'd, neglectingly, I know not what:  
He should, or should not; for he made me mad,  
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,  
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman,  
Of guns, and drums, and wounds; (God save the mark!)  
And telling me, the sov'reignest thing on earth  
Was parmacity, for an inward bruise;  
And that it was great pity, so it was,  
This villainous saltpetre should be digg'd  
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,  
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd  
So cowardly: and but for these vile guns  
He would himself have been a soldier.——

*First Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 4.*

Passions and emotions are also inflamed by comparison. A man of high rank humbles the by-standers, even to annihilate them in their own opinion. Cæsar, beholding the statue of Alexander, was greatly mortified, that now at the age of thirty-two, when Alexander died, he had not performed one memorable action.

Our opinions also are much influenced by comparison. A man whose opulence exceeds the ordinary standard, is reputed richer than he is in reality; and wisdom or weakness, if at all remarkable in an individual, is generally carried beyond the truth.

The opinion a man forms of his present distress is heightened by contrasting it with his former happiness.

Could I forget  
What I have been, I might the better bear  
What I am destin'd to. I'm not the first  
That have been wretched: but to think how much  
I have been happier.

*Southern's Innocent Adultery, Act II.*

The distress of a long journey makes even an indifferent inn agreeable: and in travelling, when the road is good, and the horseman well covered, a bad day may be agreeable by making him sensible how snug he is.

The same effect is equally remarkable, when a man opposes his condition to that of others. A ship tossed about in a storm, makes the spectator reflect upon his own ease and security, and puts these in the strongest light:

Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,  
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;  
Non quia vexari quemquam est jucunda voluptas,  
Sed quibus ipse malis careas, quæ cernere suave est.

*Lucret. l. 2. principio.*

How sweet to stand when tempests tear the main  
On the firm cliff, and mark the seaman's toil!  
Not that another's danger soothes the soul,  
But from such toil how sweet to feel secure!

A man in grief cannot bear mirth: it gives him a more lively notion of his unhappiness, and of course makes him more unhappy. Satan contemplating the beauties of the terrestrial paradise, has the following exclamation:

With what delight could I have walk'd thee round,  
If I could joy in ought, sweet interchange  
Of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,  
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crown'd.  
Rocks, dens, and caves! but I in none of these  
Find place or refuge; and the more I see  
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel  
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege  
Of contraries: all good to me becomes  
Bane, and in heav'n much worse would be my state.

*Paradise Lost, book 9. l. 114.*

*Gaunt.* All places that the eye of heaven visits,  
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.  
Teach thy necessity to reason thus:  
There is no virtue like necessity.  
Think not the King did banish thee:  
But thou the King. Woe doth the heavier sit,  
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.  
Go say, I sent thee forth to purchase honor;  
And not, the King exil'd thee. Or suppose,  
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air,  
And thou art flying to a fresher clime.  
Look what thy soul holds dear, imagine it  
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou com'st.  
Suppose the singing birds, musicians;  
The grass whereon thou tread'st, the presence-floor;  
The flow'rs, fair ladies; and thy steps, no more  
Than a delightful measure, or a dance.  
For gnarling Sorrow hath less power to bite  
The man that mocks at it, and sets it light.

*Bolingbroke.* Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand,  
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?  
Or cloy the hungry edge of Appetite,  
By bare imagination of a feast?  
Or wallow naked in December snow,  
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat  
Oh, no! the apprehension of the good  
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.

*King Richard II. Act I. Sc. 6.*

The appearance of danger gives sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain. A timorous person upon the battlements of a high tower, is seized with fear, which even the consciousness of security cannot dissipate.

But upon one of a firm head, this situation has a contrary effect: the appearance of danger heightens, by opposition, the consciousness of security, and consequently, the satisfaction that arises from security: here the feeling resembles that above mentioned, occasioned by a ship laboring in a storm.

The effect of magnifying or lessening objects by means of comparison, is so familiar, that no philosopher has thought of searching for a cause.\* The obscurity of the subject may possibly have contributed to their silence; but luckily, we discover the cause to be a principle unfolded above, which is, the influence of passion over our opinions.† We have had occasion to see many illustrious effects of that singular power of passion; and that the magnifying or the diminishing of objects by means of comparison, proceeds from the same cause, will evidently appear, by reflecting in what manner a spectator is affected, when a very large animal is for the first time placed beside a very small one of the same species. The first thing that strikes the mind, is the difference between the two animals, which is so great as to occasion surprise; and this, like other emotions, magnifying its object, makes us conceive the difference to be the greatest that can be: we see, or seem to see, the one animal extremely little, and the other extremely large. The emotion of surprise arising from any unusual resemblance, serves equally to explain, why at first view we are apt to think such resemblance more entire than it is in reality. And it must not escape observation, that the circumstances of more and less, which are the proper subjects of comparison, raise a perception so indistinct and vague as to facilitate the effect described: we have no mental standard of great and little, nor of the several degrees of any attribute; and the mind thus unrestrained, is naturally disposed to indulge its surprise to the utmost extent.

In exploring the operations of the mind, some of which are extremely nice and slippery, it is necessary to proceed with the utmost caution: and after all, seldom it happens that speculations of that kind afford any satisfaction. Luckily, in the present case, our speculations are supported by facts and solid argument. First, a small object of one species opposed to a great object of another, produces not, in any degree, that deception which is so remarkable when both objects are of the same species. The greatest disparity between objects of different kinds, is so common as to be observed with perfect indifference; but such disparity between objects of the same kind, being uncommon, never fails to produce surprise: and may we not fairly conclude, that surprise, in the latter case, is what occasions the deception, when we find no deception in the former? In the next place, if surprise be the sole cause of the deception, it follows necessarily, that the deception will vanish as soon as the objects compared

\* Practical writers upon the fine arts will attempt any thing, being blind both to the difficulty and danger. De Piles, accounting why contrast is agreeable, says, "That it is a sort of war, which puts the opposite parties in motion." Thus, to account for an effect of which there is no doubt, any cause, however foolish, is made welcome.

† Chap. 2. part 5.

become familiar. This holds so unerringly, as to leave no reasonable doubt that surprise is the prime mover: our surprise is great the first time a small lap-dog is seen with a large mastiff; but when two such animals are constantly together, there is no surprise, and it makes no difference whether they be viewed separately or in company: we set no bounds to the riches of a man who has recently made his fortune, the surprising disproportion between his present and his past situation being carried to an extreme; but with regard to a family that for many generations has enjoyed great wealth, the same false reckoning is not made. It is equally remarkable, that a trite simile has no effect; a lover compared to a moth scorching itself at the flame of a candle, originally a sprightly simile, has by frequent use lost all force; love cannot now be compared to fire, without some degree of disgust: it has been justly objected against Homer, that the lion is too often introduced into his similies; all the variety he is able to throw into them, not being sufficient to keep alive the reader's surprise.

To explain the influence of comparison upon the mind, I have chosen the simplest case, to wit, the first sight of two animals of the same kind, differing in size only; but to complete the theory, other circumstances must be taken in. And the next supposition I make, is where both animals, separately familiar to the spectator, are brought together for the first time. In that case, the effect of magnifying and diminishing, is found remarkably greater than in that first mentioned; and the reason will appear upon analyzing the operation: the first feeling we have is of surprise at the uncommon difference of two creatures of the same species: we are next sensible, that the one appears less, the other larger, than they did formerly; and that new circumstance, increasing our surprise, makes us imagine a still greater opposition between the animals than if we had formed no notion of them beforehand.

I shall confine myself to one other supposition: That the spectator was acquainted beforehand with one of the animals only, the lap-dog for example. This new circumstance will vary the effect; for instead of widening the natural difference, by enlarging in appearance the one animal, and diminishing the other in proportion, the whole apparent alteration will rest upon the lap-dog: the surprise to find it less than it appeared formerly, directs to it our whole attention, and makes us conceive it to be a most-diminutive creature: the mastiff in the mean time is quite overlooked. I am able to illustrate this effect by a familiar example. Take a piece of paper, or of linen tolerably white, and compare it with a pure white of the same kind: the judgment we formed of the first object is instantly varied; and the surprise occasioned by finding it less white than was thought, produces a hasty conviction that it is much less white than it is in reality: withdrawing now the pure white, and putting in its place a deep black, the surprise occasioned by that new circumstance carries us to the other extreme, and makes us conceive the object first mentioned to be a pure white; and thus experience compels us to acknowledge, that our emotions have an influence even upon our

eyesight. This experiment leads to a general observation, that whatever is found more strange or beautiful than was expected, is judged to be more strange or beautiful than it is in reality. Hence a common artifice, to depreciate beforehand what we wish to make a figure in the opinion of others.

The comparisons employed by poets and orators, are of the kind last mentioned; for it is always a known object that is to be magnified or lessened. The former is effected by likening it to some grand object, or by contrasting it with one of an opposite character. To effectuate the latter, the method must be reversed: the object must be contrasted with something superior to it, or likened to something inferior. The whole effect is produced upon the principal object, which by that means is elevated above its rank, or depressed below it.

In accounting for the effect that any unusual resemblance or dissimilitude has upon the mind, no cause has been mentioned but surprise; and to prevent confusion, it was proper to discuss that cause first. But surprise is not the only cause of the effect described: another concurs which operates, perhaps, not less powerfully, namely, a principle in human nature that lies still in obscurity, not having been unfolded by any writer, though its effects are extensive; and as it is not distinguished by a proper name, the reader must be satisfied with the following description. Every man who studies himself or others, must be sensible of a tendency or propensity in the mind, to complete every work that is begun, and to carry things to their full perfection. There is little opportunity to display that propensity upon natural operations, which are seldom left imperfect; but in the operations of art, it has great scope: it impels us to persevere in our own work, and to wish for the completion of what another is doing: we feel a sensible pleasure when the work is brought to perfection; and our pain is no less sensible when we are disappointed. Hence our uneasiness, when an interesting story is broken off in the middle, when a piece of music ends without a close, or when a building or garden is left unfinished. The same propensity operates in making collections, such as the whole works good and bad of any author. A certain person attempted to collect prints of all the capital paintings, and succeeded except as to a few. La Bruyere remarks, that an anxious search was made for these; not for their value, but to complete the set.\*

\* The examples above given, are of things that can be carried to an end or conclusion. But the same uneasiness is perceptible with respect to things that admit not any conclusion; witness a series that has no end, commonly called an *infinite series*. The mind moving along such a series, begins soon to feel an uneasiness, which becomes more and more sensible, in continuing its progress without hope of an end.

An unbounded prospect doth not long continue agreeable: we soon feel a slight uneasiness, which increases with the time we bestow upon the prospect. An avenue without a terminating object, is one instance of an unbounded prospect; and we might hope to find the cause of its disagreeableness, if it resembled an infinite series. The eye indeed promises no resemblance; for the sharpest eye commands but a certain length of space, and there it is bounded, however obscurely. But the mind perceives things as they exist: and the line is carried on



The final cause of the propensity is an additional proof of its existence: human works are of no significance till they be completed; and reason is not always a sufficient counterbalance to indolence: some principle over and above is necessary, to excite our industry, and to prevent our stopping short in the middle of the course.

We need not lose time to describe the co-operation of the foregoing propensity with surprise, in producing the effect that follows any unusual resemblance or dissimilitude. Surprise first operates, and carries our opinion of the resemblance or dissimilitude beyond truth. The propensity we have been describing carries us still farther; for it forces upon the mind a conviction, that the resemblance or dissimilitude is complete. We need no better illustration, than the resemblance that is fancied in some pebbles to a tree or an insect; which resemblance, however faint in reality, is conceived to be wonderfully perfect. The tendency to complete a resemblance acting jointly with surprise, carries the mind sometimes so far, as even to presume upon future events. In the Greek tragedy entitled *Phœnices*, those unhappy women, seeing the place where it was intended they should be slain, cried out with anguish, "They now saw their cruel destiny had condemned them to die in that place, being the same where they had been exposed in their infancy."<sup>\*</sup>

The propensity to advance every thing to its perfection, not only co-operates with surprise to deceive the mind, but of itself is able to produce that effect. Of this we see many instances where there is no place for surprise; and the first I shall give is of resemblance. *Unumquodque eodem modo dissolvitur quo colligatum est,*<sup>†</sup> is a maxim in the Roman law that has no foundation in truth; for tying and loosing, building and demolishing, are acts opposite to each other, and are performed by opposite means: but when these acts are connected by their relation to the same subject, their connection

in idea without end; in which respect an unbounded prospect is similar to an infinite series. In fact, the uneasiness of an unbounded prospect, differs very little in its feeling from that of an infinite series; and therefore we may reasonably presume, that both proceed from the same cause.

We next consider a prospect unbounded every way, as, for example, a great plain or the ocean, viewed from an eminence. We feel here an uneasiness occasioned by the want of an end or termination, precisely as in the other cases. A prospect unbounded every way, is indeed so far singular, as at first to be more pleasant than a prospect that is unbounded in one direction only, and afterward to be more painful. But these circumstances are easily explained, without wounding the general theory: the pleasure we feel at first, is a vivid emotion of grandeur, arising from the immense extent of the object: and to increase the pain we feel afterward for the want of a termination, there concurs a pain of a different kind, occasioned by stretching the eye to comprehend so wide a prospect; a pain that gradually increases with the repeated efforts we make to grasp the whole.

It is the same principle, if I mistake not, which operates imperceptibly with respect to quantity and number. Another's property indented into my field, gives me uneasiness; and I am eager to make the purchase, not for profit, but in order to square my field. Xerxes and his army, in their passage to Greece, were sumptuously entertained by Pythius the Lydian: Xerxes recompensed him with 7000 Darics, which he wanted to complete the sum of four millions.

\* Aristotle, Poet. cap. 17.

† Every thing is dissolved in the same manner in which it is tied together

leads us to imagine a sort of resemblance between them, which by the foregoing propensity is conceived to be as complete as possible. The next instance shall be of contrast. Addison observes, "That the palest features look the most agreeable in white; that a face which is overflushed appears to advantage in the deepest scarlet; and that a dark complexion is not a little alleviated by a black hood."\* The foregoing propensity serves to account for these appearances; to make which evident, one of the cases shall suffice. A complexion, however dark, never approaches to black: when these colors appear together, their opposition strikes us; and the propensity we have to complete the opposition makes the darkness of complexion vanish out of sight.

The operation of this propensity, even where there is no ground for surprise, is not confined to opinion or conviction: so powerful it is, as to make us sometimes proceed to action, in order to complete a resemblance or dissimilitude. If this appear obscure, it will be made clear by the following instances. Upon what principle is the *lex talionis* founded, other than to make the punishment resemble the mischief? Reason dictates, that there ought to be a conformity or resemblance between a crime and its punishment; and the foregoing propensity impels us to make the resemblance as complete as possible. Titus Livius, under the influence of that propensity, accounts for a certain punishment by a resemblance between it and the crime, too subtle for common apprehension. Treating of Mettus Fuffetius, the Alban general, who, for treachery to the Romans his allies, was sentenced to be torn to pieces by horses, he puts the following speech in the mouth of Tullus Hostilius, who decreed the punishment. "Mette Fuffeti, inquit, si ipse discere posses fidem ac fœdera servare, vivo tibi ea disciplina a me adhibita esset. Nunc, quoniam, tuum insanabile ingenium est, at tu tuo supplicio doce humanum genus, ea sancta credere, quæ a te violata sunt. Ut igitur paulo ante animum inter Fidenatem Romanamque rem ancipitem gessisti, ita jam corpus passim distrahendum dabis."† By the same influence, the sentence is often executed upon the very spot where the crime was committed. In the *Electra* of Sophocles, Egistheus is dragged from the theatre into an inner room of the supposed palace, to suffer death where he murdered Agamemnon. Shakespeare, whose knowledge of nature is no less profound than extensive, has not overlooked this propensity:

*Othello.* Get me some poison, Iago, this night; I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and her beauty unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

*Iago.* Do it not with poison; strangle her in bed, even in the bed she hath contaminated.

*Othello.* Good, good: the justice of it pleases; very good.

*Othello*, Act IV. Sc. 5.

\* Spectator, No. 265.

† Mettus Fulfetius, he says, if you could learn faith, and attention to treaties, you should live, and receive similar treatment from me. Now, since your nature is incurable, your own punishment shall teach mankind to believe in the sacredness of those things which you have violated. As, therefore, you have held a *divided mind* with regard to the Romans and the Fidenates, so shall your *body* be now *divided* in all quarters.—*Lib. 1. sect. 28.*

*Warwick.* From off the gates of York fetch down the head,  
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there.  
Instead whereof let his supply the room.  
Measure for measure must be answered.

*Third Part of Henry VI. Act II. Sc.*

Persons in their last moments are generally seized with an anxiety to be buried with their relations. In the *Amynta* of Tasso, the lover, hearing that his mistress was torn to pieces by a wolf, expresses a desire to die the same death.\*

Upon the subject in general I have two remarks to add. The first concerns resemblance, which, when too entire, has no effect, however different in kind the things compared may be. The remark is applicable to works of art only; for natural objects of different kinds have scarcely ever an entire resemblance. To give an example in a work of art, marble is a sort of matter very different from what composes an animal; and marble cut into a human figure produces great pleasure by the resemblance; but, if a marble statue be colored like a picture, the resemblance is so entire, as at a distance to make the statue appear a person: we discover the mistake when we approach; and no other emotion is raised, than surprise occasioned by the deception. The figure still appears a real person, rather than an imitation; and we must use reflection to correct the mistake. This cannot happen in a picture; for the resemblance can never be so entire as to disguise the imitation.

The other remark relates to contrast. Emotions make the greatest figure when contrasted in succession; but the succession ought neither to be rapid, nor immoderately slow: if too slow, the effect of contrast becomes faint by the distance of the emotions; and if rapid, no single emotion has room to expand itself to its full size, but is stifled, as it were, in the birth, by a succeeding emotion. The funeral oration of the Bishop of Meaux upon the Dutchess of Orleans is a perfect hodge-podge of cheerful and melancholy representations following each other in the quickest succession. Opposite emotions are best felt in succession; but each emotion separately should be raised to its due pitch, before another be introduced.

What is above laid down, will enable us to determine a very important question concerning emotions raised by the fine arts, namely, whether ought similar emotions to succeed each other, or dissimilar? The emotions raised by the fine arts are, for the most part, too nearly related to make a figure by resemblance; and for that reason their succession ought to be regulated as much as possible by contrast. This holds confessedly in epic and dramatic compositions; and the best writers, led, perhaps, by taste more than by reasoning, have generally aimed at that beauty. It holds equally in music: in the same cantata, all the variety of emotions that are within the power of music may not only be indulged, but, to make the greatest figure, ought to be contrasted. In gardening, there is an additional reason for the rule. The emotions raised by that art are at best so faint, that every artifice should be employed to give them their utmost vigor: a field

\* Act IV. Sc. 2.

may be laid out in grand, sweet, gay, neat, wild, melancholy scenes; and when these are viewed in succession, grandeur ought to be contrasted with neatness, regularity with wildness, and gaiety with melancholy, so that each emotion may succeed its opposite: nay, it is an improvement to intermix in the succession rude uncultivated spots as well as unbounded views, which in themselves are disagreeable, but in succession heighten the feeling of the agreeable objects; and we have nature for our guide, which in her most beautiful landscapes often intermixes rugged rocks, dirty marshes, and barren stony heaths. The greatest masters of music have the same view in their compositions: the second part of an Italian song seldom conveys any sentiment; and, by its harshness, seems purposely contrived to give a greater relish for the interesting parts of the composition.

A small garden comprehended under a single view, affords little opportunity for that embellishment. Dissimilar emotions require different tones of mind; and therefore in conjunction can never be pleasant:\* gayety and sweetness may be combined, or wildness and gloominess; but a composition of gayety and gloominess is distasteful. The rude uncultivated copartment of furze and broom in Richmond garden has a good effect in the succession of objects; but a spot of that nature would be insufferable in the midst of a polished parterre or flower-plot. A garden, therefore, if not of great extent, admits not dissimilar emotions; and in ornamenting a small garden, the safest course is to confine it to a single expression. For the same reason, a landscape ought also to be confined to a single expression; and accordingly it is a rule in painting, that if the subject be gay, every figure ought to contribute to that emotion.

It follows from the foregoing train of reasoning, that a garden, near a great city, ought to have an air of solitude. The solitariness again of a waste country ought to be contrasted in forming a garden; no temples, no obscure walks; but *jets d'eau*, cascades, objects active, gay, and splendid. Nay, such a garden should in some measure avoid imitating nature, by taking on an extraordinary appearance of regularity and art, to show the busy hand of man, which in a waste country has a fine effect by contrast.

It may be gathered from what is said above,† that wit and ridicule make not an agreeable mixture with grandeur. Dissimilar emotions have a fine effect in a slow succession; but in a rapid succession, which approaches to coexistence, they will not be relished: in the midst of a labored and elevated description of a battle, Virgil introduces a ludicrous image, which is certainly out of its place.

Obvius ambustum torrem Chorinæus ab ara  
Corripit, et venienti Ebuso plagamque ferenti  
Occupat es flammis: illi ingens barba reluxit,  
Nidoremque ambusta dedit. Æn. XII. 298.

Priest Corynæus armed his better hand,  
From his own altar, with a blazing brand;  
And as Ebusus with a thundering pace  
Advanced to battle, dashed it on his face:  
His bristly beard shines out with sudden fires,  
The crackling crop a noisome scent expires.

\* See Chap. 2. Part 4.

† Chap. 2. Part 4.

The following image is no less ludicrous, nor less improperly placed

Mentre fan questi i bellici stromenti  
Perchè debbiano tosto in uso porre,  
Il gran nemico de l'humane genti  
Contra i Christiani i lividi occhi torse  
E lor veggendo à le bell' opre intenti,  
Ambo le labra per furor si morse:  
E qual tauro ferito, il suo dolore  
Verso mugghiando e sospirando fuore. *Gerusal. Cant. IV. st. 1.*

While thus their work went on with luckie speed,  
And reared rammes their horrid fronts advance,  
The ancient foe to man, and mortal seed,  
His wannish eies upon them beat askance;  
And when he saw their labours well succeed,  
He wept for rage, and threat'ned dire mischance,  
He chokt his curses, to himselfe he spake,  
Such noise wild buls, that softly bellow, make. *Fairfax.*

It would, however, be too austere to banish altogether ludicrous images from an epic poem. This poem does not always soar above the clouds: it admits great variety; and upon occasion can descend even to the ground without sinking. In its more familiar tones, a ludicrous scene may be introduced without impropriety. This is done by Virgil\* in a foot-race; the circumstances of which, not excepting the ludicrous part, are copied from Homer.† After a fit of merriment, we are, it is true, the less disposed to the serious and sublime: but then, a ludicrous scene, by unbending the mind from severe application to more interesting subjects, may prevent fatigue, and preserve our relish entire.

## CHAPTER IX.

### UNIFORMITY AND VARIETY.

Succession of perceptions examined with respect to order and connection, and with respect to uniformity and variety—The succession by artificial methods can be rendered uniform and various—The train left to its natural course, not regular—The causes by which the rates of succession are varied—The effect of a peculiar constitution of mind, in accelerating or retarding it—The motion of the train depends on the perceptions which compose it—The effect of occupation—The effect of temper and constitution—The effect of the will, over different objects—Our power over our train strengthened by discipline and business—The mind most at ease when the perceptions flow in their natural course—Pain excited by accelerating or retarding the natural course of our perceptions—Number without variety, not agreeable—Excess in variety, disagreeable—To alter the variety which nature requires, as painful as to alter the velocity—Final cause why nature has affixed pleasure to a moderate train—A rapid train is painful, to prevent injuring the mind by too great activity—Another, to prevent rashness—A quick train made agreeable by habit—Variety corresponding with our perceptions, agreeable in works of art—Color and sound often repeated, become unpleasant; varied, they are agreeable—In works of art, exposed to view, variety to be studied—In a landscape, among the same objects, contrast should prevail—In writing for amusement, variety should prevail.

In attempting to explain uniformity and variety, in order to show how we are affected by these circumstances, a doubt occurs, what

\* *Æn. lib. 5.*

† *Iliad, book 23. l. 879.*

method ought to be followed. In adhering closely to the subject, I foresee difficulties; and yet by indulging such a circuit as may be necessary for a satisfactory view, I probably shall incur the censure of wandering.—Yet the dread of censure ought not to prevail over what is proper: beside that the intended circuit will lead to some collateral matters, that are not only curious, but of considerable importance in the science of human nature.

The necessary succession of perceptions may be examined in two different views; one with respect to order and connection, and one with respect to uniformity and variety. In the first view it is handled above;\* and I now proceed to the second. The world we inhabit is replete with things no less remarkable for their variety than for their number: these, unfolded by the wonderful mechanism of external sense, furnish the mind with many perceptions; which, joined with ideas of memory, of imagination, and of reflection, form a complete train that has not a gap or interval. This train of perceptions and ideas depends very little on will. The mind, as has been observed,† is so constituted, “that it can by no effort break off the succession of its ideas, nor keep its attention long fixed upon the same object:” we can arrest a perception in its course; we can shorten its natural duration, to make room for another; we can vary the succession, by change of place or of amusement; and we can, in some measure, prevent variety, by frequently recalling the same object after short intervals: but still there must be a succession, and a change from one perception to another. By artificial means, the succession may be retarded or accelerated, may be rendered more various or more uniform, but in one shape or another is unavoidable.

The train, even when left to its ordinary course, is not always uniform in its motion; there are natural causes that accelerate or retard it considerably. The first I shall mention, is a peculiar constitution of mind. One man is distinguished from another, by no circumstance more remarkably, than his train of perceptions. To a cold languid temper belongs a slow course of perceptions, which occasions dulness of apprehension and sluggishness in action: to a warm temper, on the contrary, belongs a quick course of perceptions, which occasions quickness of apprehension and activity in business. The Asiatic nations, the Chinese especially, are observed to be more cool and deliberate than the Europeans; may not the reason be, that heat enervates by exhausting the spirits? and that a certain degree of cold, as in the middle regions of Europe, bracing the fibres, rouses the mind, and produces a brisk circulation of thought, accompanied with vigor in action? In youth is observable a quicker succession of perceptions than in old age: and hence, in youth, a remarkable avidity for variety of amusements, which in riper years give place to more uniform and more sedate occupation. This qualifies men of middle age for business, where activity is required, but with a greater proportion of uniformity than variety. In old age, a slow and languid succession makes variety unnecessary; and for that reason, the aged, in all their motions, are generally governed by an

\* Chap. 1.

† Locke, book 2. chap. 14.



habitual uniformity. Whatever be the cause, we may venture to pronounce, that heat in the imagination and temper, is always connected with a brisk flow of perceptions.

The natural rate of succession, depends also, in some degree, upon the particular perceptions that compose the train. An agreeable object, taking a strong hold of the mind, occasions a slower succession than when the objects are indifferent : grandeur and novelty fix the attention for a considerable time, excluding all other ideas ; and the mind thus occupied is sensible of no vacuity. Some emotions, by hurrying the mind from object to object, accelerate the succession. Where the train is composed of connected perceptions or ideas, the succession is quick ; for it is so ordered by nature, that the mind goes easily and sweetly along connected objects.\* On the other hand, the succession must be slow, where the train is composed of unconnected perceptions or ideas, which find not ready access to the mind ; and that an unconnected object is not admitted without a struggle, appears from the unsettled state of the mind for some moments after such an object is presented, wavering between it and the former train : during that short period, one or other of the former objects will intrude, perhaps oftener than once, till the attention be fixed entirely upon the new object. The same observations are applicable to ideas suggested by language : the mind can bear a quick succession of related ideas ; but an unrelated idea, for which the mind is not prepared, takes time to make an impression ; and therefore a train composed of such ideas, ought to proceed with a slow pace. Hence an epic poem, a play, or any story connected in all its parts, may be perused in a shorter time, than a book of maxims or apothegms, of which a quick succession creates both confusion and fatigue.

Such latitude has nature indulged in the rate of succession : what latitude it indulges with respect to uniformity, we proceed to examine. The uniformity or variety of a train, so far as composed of perceptions, depends on the particular objects that surround the percipient at the time. The present occupation must also have an influence ; for one is sometimes engaged in a multiplicity of affairs, sometimes altogether vacant. A natural train of ideas of memory is more circumscribed, each object being, by some connection, linked to what precedes and to what follows it : these connections, which are many, and of different kinds, afford scope for a sufficient degree of variety ; and at the same time prevent that degree which is unpleasant by excess. Temper and constitution also have an influence here, as well as upon the rate of succession : a man of a calm and sedate temper, admits not willingly any idea but what is regularly introduced by a proper connection : one of a roving disposition embraces with avidity every new idea, however slender its relation be to those that preceded it. Neither must we overlook the nature of the perceptions that compose the train ; for their influence is no less with respect to uniformity and variety, than with respect to the rate of succession. The mind engrossed by any passion, love or hatred, hope or fear, broods over its object, and can bear no interruption ; and

\* See Chap. 1.



in such a state, the train of perceptions must not only be slow, but extremely uniform. Anger newly inflamed eagerly grasps its object, and leaves not a cranny in the mind for another thought but of revenge. In the character of Hotspur, that state of mind is represented to the life; a picture remarkable for likeness as well as for high coloring.

*Worcester.* Peace, cousin, say no more :  
And now I will unclasp a secret book,  
And to your quick conceiving discontents  
I'll read you matter, deep and dangerous ;  
As full of peril and advent'rous spirit  
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud,  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

*Hotspur.* If he fall in, good night. Or sink or swim  
Send danger from the east into the west,  
So honor cross it from the north to south ;  
And let them grapple. Oh ! the blood more stirs  
To rouse a lion than to start a hare.

*Worcester.* Those same noble Scots,  
That are your prisoners——

*Hotspur.* I'll keep them all ;  
By Heav'n, he shall not have a Scot of them :  
No ; if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not ;  
I'll keep them, by this hand.

*Worcester.* You start away,  
And lend no ear unto my purposes :  
Those pris'ners you shall keep.

*Hotspur.* I will, that's flat :  
He said he would not ransom Mortimer ;  
Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer :  
But I will find him when he lies asleep,  
And in his ear I'll holla *Mortimer* !  
Nay, I will have a starling taught to speak  
Nothing but *Mortimer*, and give it him,  
To keep his anger still in motion.

*Worcester.* Hear you, cousin, a word.

*Hotspur.* All studies here I solemnly defy,  
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke  
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,  
(But that I think his father loves him not,  
And would be glad he met with some mischance),  
I'd have him poison'd with a pot of ale.

*Worcester.* Farewell, my kinsman, I will talk to you  
When you are better temper'd to attend.

*First Part, Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 3.*

Having viewed a train of perceptions as directed by nature, and the variations of which it is susceptible from different necessary causes, we proceed to examine how far it is subjected to will ; for that this faculty has some influence, is observed above. And first, the rate of succession may be retarded by insisting upon one object, and propelled by dismissing another before its time. But such voluntary mutations in the natural course of succession, have limits that cannot be extended by the most painful efforts : which will appear from considering, that the mind, circumscribed in its capacity, cannot, at the same instant, admit many perceptions ; and when replete, that it has not place for new perceptions, till others are removed ; consequently, that a voluntary change of perceptions cannot be instan-

taneous, as the time it requires sets bounds to the velocity of succession. On the other hand, the power we have to arrest a flying perception, is equally limited; and the reason is, that the longer we detain any perception, the more difficulty we find in the operation; till, the difficulty becoming unsurmountable, we are forced to quit our hold, and to permit the train to take its usual course.

The power we have over this train as to uniformity and variety, is in some cases very great, in others very little. A train composed of perceptions of external objects, depends entirely on the place we occupy, and admits not more nor less variety but by change of place. A train composed of ideas of memory, is still less under our power; because we cannot, at will, call up any idea that is not connected with the train.\* But a train of ideas suggested by reading, may be varied at will, provided we have books at hand.

The power that nature has given us over our train of perceptions, may be greatly strengthened by proper discipline, and by an early application to business; witness some mathematicians, who go far beyond common nature in slowness and uniformity; and still more persons devoted to religious exercises, who pass whole days in contemplation, and impose upon themselves long and severe penances. With respect to celerity and variety, it is not easily conceived what length a habit of activity in affairs will carry some men. Let a stranger, or let any person to whom the sight is not familiar, attend the Chancellor of Great Britain through the labors but of one day, during a session of Parliament: how great will be his astonishment! what multiplicity of law-business, what deep thinking, and what elaborate application to matters of government! The train of perceptions must in that great man be accelerated far beyond the ordinary course of nature: yet no confusion or hurry; but in every article the greatest order and accuracy. Such is the force of habit. How happy is man, to have the command of a principle of action that can elevate him so far above the ordinary condition of humanity!†

We are now prepared for considering a train of perceptions, with respect to pleasure and pain: and to that speculation peculiar attention must be given, because it serves to explain the effects that uniformity and variety have upon the mind. A man, when his perceptions flow in their natural course, feels himself free, light, and easy, especially after any forcible acceleration or retardation. On the other hand, accelerating or retarding the natural course, excites a pain, which, though scarcely felt in small removes, becomes considerable toward the extremes. Aversion to fix on a single object for a long time, or to take in a multiplicity of objects in a short time, is remarkable in children; and equally so in men unaccustomed to business: a man languishes when the succession is very slow; and, if he grows not impatient, is apt to fall asleep: during a rapid succession, he has a feeling as if his head were turning round; he is fatigued, and his pain resembles that of weariness after bodily labor.

But a moderate course will not satisfy the mind, unless the per-

\* See Chap. 1.

† This chapter was composed in the year 1753.

ceptions be also diversified: number without variety is not sufficient to constitute an agreeable train. In comparing a few objects, uniformity is pleasant; but the frequent reiteration of uniform objects becomes unpleasant: one tires of a scene that is not diversified; and soon feels a sort of unnatural restraint when confined within a narrow range, whether occasioned by a retarded succession, or by too great uniformity. An excess in variety is, on the other hand, fatiguing: which is felt even in a train of related perceptions; much more of unrelated perceptions, which gain not admittance without effort: the effort, it is true, is scarcely perceptible in a single instance; but by frequent reiteration it becomes exceedingly painful. Whatever be the cause, the fact is certain, that a man never finds himself more at ease, than when his perceptions succeed each other with a certain degree, not only of velocity, but also of variety. The pleasure that arises from a train of connected ideas, is remarkable in a reverie; especially where the imagination interposes, and is active in coining new ideas, which is done with wonderful facility. one must be sensible, that the serenity and ease of the mind in that state, makes a great part of the enjoyment. The case is different where external objects enter into the train; for these, making their appearance without order, and without connection save that of contiguity, form a train of perceptions that may be extremely uniform or extremely diversified; which, for opposite reasons, are both of them painful.

To alter, by an act of will, that degree of variety which nature requires, is not less painful, than to alter that degree of velocity which it requires. Contemplation, when the mind is long attached to one subject, becomes painful by restraining the free range of perception: curiosity, and the prospect of useful discoveries, may fortify one to bear that pain: but it is deeply felt by the bulk of mankind, and produces in them aversion to all abstract sciences. In any profession or calling, a train of operation that is simple and reiterated without intromission, makes the operator languish, and lose vigor: he complains neither of too great labor, nor of too little action; but regrets the want of variety, and the being obliged to do the same thing over and over: where the operation is sufficiently varied, the mind retains its vigor, and is pleased with its condition. Actions again create uneasiness when excessive in number or variety, though in every other respect pleasant: thus a throng of business in law, in physic, or in traffic, distresses and distracts the mind, unless where a habit of application is acquired by long and constant exercise: the excessive variety is the distressing circumstance; and the mind suffers grievously by being kept constantly upon the stretch.

With relation to involuntary causes disturbing that degree of variety which nature requires, a slight pain affecting one part of the body without variation, becomes, by its constancy and long duration, almost insupportable; the patient, sensible that the pain is not increased in degree, complains of its constancy more than of its severity, of its engrossing his whole thoughts, and admitting no other object. A shifting pain is more tolerable, because change of place

contributes to variety: and an intermitting pain, suffering other objects to intervene, still more so. Again, any single color or sound often returning becomes unpleasant; as may be observed in viewing a train of similar apartments in a great house painted with the same color, and in hearing the prolonged tollings of a bell. Color and sound varied within certain limits, though without any order, are pleasant; witness the various colors of plants and flowers in a field, and the various notes of birds in a thicket: increase the number of variety, and the feeling becomes unpleasant; thus a great variety of colors, crowded upon a small canvas or in quick succession, create an uneasy feeling, which is prevented by putting the colors at a greater distance from each other, either of place or of time. A number of voices in a crowded assembly, a number of animals collected in a market, produce an unpleasant feeling; though a few of them together, or all of them in a moderate succession, would be pleasant. And because of the same excess in variety, a number of pains felt in different parts of the body, at the same instant or in a rapid succession, are an exquisite torture.

The pleasure or pain resulting from a train of perceptions in different circumstances, are a beautiful contrivance of nature for valuable purposes. But being sensible, that the mind, inflamed with speculations so highly interesting, is beyond measure disposed to conviction; I shall be watchful to admit no argument nor remark, but what appears solidly founded; and with that caution I proceed to unfold these purposes. It is occasionally observed above, that persons of a phlegmatic temperament, having a sluggish train of perceptions are indisposed to action; and that activity constantly accompanies a brisk flow of perceptions. To ascertain that fact, a man need not go abroad for experiments: reflecting on things passing in his own mind, he will find, that a brisk circulation of thought constantly prompts him to action; and that he is averse to action when his perceptions languish in their course. But as man by nature is formed for action, and must be active in order to be happy, nature has kindly provided against indolence, by annexing pleasure to a moderate course of perceptions, and by making any remarkable retardation painful. A slow course of perceptions is attended with another bad effect: man, in a few capital cases, is governed by propensity or instinct; but in matters that admit deliberation and choice, reason is assigned him for a guide: now, as reasoning requires often a great compass of ideas, their succession ought to be so quick as readily to furnish every motive that may be necessary for mature deliberation; in a languid succession, motives will often occur after action is commenced, when it is too late to retreat.

Nature has guarded man, her favorite, against a succession too rapid, no less carefully than against one too slow: both are equally painful, though the pain is not the same in both. Many are the good effects of that contrivance. In the first place, as the exertion of bodily faculties is by certain painful sensations confined within proper limits, Nature is equally provident with respect to the nobler faculties of the mind: the pain of an accelerated course of perceptions,

is Nature's admonition to relax our pace, and to admit a more gentle exertion of thought. Another valuable purpose is discovered upon reflecting in what manner objects are imprinted on the mind: to give the memory firm hold of an external object, time is required, even where attention is the greatest; and a moderate degree of attention, which is the common case, must be continued still longer to produce the same effect. A rapid succession, accordingly, must prevent objects from making an impression so deep as to be of real service in life; and Nature, for the sake of memory, has, by a painful feeling, guarded against a rapid succession. But a still more valuable purpose is answered by the contrivance; as, on the one hand, a sluggish course of perceptions indisposes to action; so, on the other, a course too rapid impels to rash and precipitant action: prudent conduct is the child of deliberation and clear conception, for which there is no place in a rapid course of thought. Nature therefore, taking measures for prudent conduct, has guarded us effectually from precipitancy of thought; by making it painful.

Nature not only provides against a succession too slow or too quick, but makes the middle course extremely pleasant. Nor is that course confined within narrow bounds: every man can naturally, without pain, accelerate or retard, in some degree, the rate of his perceptions. And he can do it in a still greater degree by the force of habit: a habit of contemplation annihilates the pain of a retarded course of perceptions; and a busy life, after long practice, makes acceleration pleasant.

Concerning the final cause of our taste for variety, it will be considered, that human affairs, complex by variety as well as number, require the distributing of our attention and activity in measure and proportion. Nature therefore, to secure a just distribution corresponding to the variety of human affairs, has made too great uniformity or too great variety in the course of perceptions, equally unpleasant: and indeed, were we addicted to either extreme, our internal constitution would be ill suited to our external circumstances. At the same time, where great uniformity of operation is required, as in several manufactures, or great variety, as in law or physic, Nature, attentive to all our wants, has also provided for these cases, by implanting in the breast of every person, an efficacious principle that leads to habit: an obstinate perseverance in the same occupation, relieves from the pain of excessive uniformity; and the like perseverance in a quick circulation of different occupations, relieves from the pain of excessive variety. And thus we come to take delight in several occupations, that by nature, without habit, are not a little disgusting.

A middle rate also in the train of perceptions between uniformity and variety, is no less pleasant than between quickness and slowness. The mind of man, so framed, is wonderfully adapted to the course of human affairs, which are continually changing, but not without connection: it is equally adapted to the acquisition of knowledge, which results chiefly from discovering resemblances among differing objects, and differences among resembling objects: such occupation,

even abstracting from the knowledge we acquire, is in itself delightful, by preserving a middle rate between too great uniformity and too great variety.

We are now arrived at the chief purpose of the present chapter which is to consider uniformity and variety with relation to the fine arts, in order to discover, if we can, when it is that the one ought to prevail, and when the other. And the knowledge we have obtained, will even at first view suggest a general observation, that in every work of art, it must be agreeable, to find that degree of variety which corresponds to the natural course of our perceptions; and that an excess in variety or in uniformity must be disagreeable, by varying that natural course. For that reason, works of art admit more or less variety according to the nature of the subject: in a picture of an interesting event that strongly attaches the spectator to a single object, the mind relishes not a multiplicity of figures nor of ornaments: a picture representing a gay subject, admits great variety of figures and ornaments; because these are agreeable to the mind in a cheerful tone. The same observation is applicable to poetry and to music.

It must at the same time be remarked, that one can bear a greater variety of natural objects, than of objects in a picture; and a greater variety in a picture, than in a description. A real object presented to view, makes an impression more readily than when represented in colors, and much more readily than when represented in words. Hence it is, that the profuse variety of objects in some natural landscapes, neither breeds confusion nor fatigue: and for the same reason, there is place for greater variety of ornament in a picture than in a poem. A picture, however, like a building, ought to be so simple as to be comprehended in one view. Whether every one of Le Brun's pictures of Alexander's history will stand this test, is submitted to judges.

From these general observations, I proceed to particulars. In works exposed continually to public view, variety ought to be studied. It is a rule, accordingly, in sculpture, to contrast the different limbs of a statue, in order to give it all the variety possible. Though the cone, in a single view, be more beautiful than the pyramid; yet a pyramidal steeple, because of its variety, is justly preferred. For the same reason, the oval is preferred before the circle; and painters, in copying buildings or any regular work, give an air of variety, by representing the subject in an angular view: we are pleased with the variety, without losing sight of the regularity. In a landscape representing animals, those especially of the same kind, contrast ought to prevail: to draw one sleeping, another awake; one sitting, another in motion; one moving toward the spectator, another from him, is the life of such a performance.

In every sort of writing intended for amusement, variety is necessary in proportion to the length of the work. Want of variety is sensibly felt in Davila's history of the civil wars of France: the events are indeed important and various; but the reader languishes by a tiresome monotony of character, every person engaged being



figured a consummate politician, governed by interest only. It is hard to say, whether Ovid disgusts more by too great variety, or too great uniformity. His stories are all of the same kind, concluding invariably with the transformation of one being into another; and so far he is tiresome by excess in uniformity: he is not less fatiguing by excess in variety, hurrying his reader incessantly from story to story. Ariosto is still more fatiguing than Ovid, by exceeding the just bounds of variety. Not satisfied, like Ovid, with a succession in his stories, he distracts the reader, by jumbling together a multitude of them without any connection. Nor is the *Orlando Furioso* less tiresome by its uniformity than the *Metamorphoses*, though in a different manner. After a story is brought to a crisis, the reader, intent on the catastrophe, is suddenly snatched away to a new story, which makes no impression so long as the mind is occupied with the former. This tantalizing method, from which the author never once swerves during the course of a long work, besides its uniformity, has another bad effect: it prevents that sympathy, which is raised by an interesting event when the reader meets with no interruption.

The emotions produced by our perceptions in a train, have been little considered, and less understood; the subject therefore required an elaborate discussion. It may surprise some readers to find variety treated as only contributing to make a train of perceptions pleasant, when it is commonly held to be a necessary ingredient in beauty of whatever kind; according to the definition, "That beauty consists in uniformity amid variety." But, after the subject is explained and illustrated as above, I presume it will be evident, that this definition, however applicable to one or other species, is far from being just with respect to beauty in general: variety contributes no share to the beauty of a moral action, nor of a mathematical theorem: and numberless are the beautiful objects of sight that have little or no variety in them: a globe, the most uniform of all figures, is of all the most beautiful; and a square, though more beautiful than a trapezium, has less variety in its constituent parts. The foregoing definition, which at best is but obscurely expressed, is only applicable to a number of objects in a group or in succession, among which, indeed, a due mixture of uniformity and variety is always agreeable, provided the particular objects, separately considered, be in any degree beautiful, for uniformity amid variety among ugly objects, affords no pleasure. This circumstance is totally omitted in the definition; and indeed to have mentioned it, would, at the very first glance, have shown the definition to be imperfect: for to define beauty as arising from beautiful objects blended together in a due proportion of uniformity and variety, would be too gross to pass current: as nothing can be more gross, than to employ in a definition the very term that is to be explained.



## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING THE WORKS OF NATURE, CHIEFLY WITH RESPECT TO  
UNIFORMITY AND VARIETY.

Beauty and design in the works of nature, equally conspicuous, both in the internal and external structure—External structure respects regularity in animals—Beauty of inanimate nature—Mechanical operations of man confined to the surfaces of bodies—The operations of nature diffused through the most intimate and minute parts of all substances—The mechanical power of nature not confined to the smaller bodies, but extends to the largest ones—The wonderful power of nature in connecting and propagating systems—The connection betwixt the internal frame and external nature, of all, the most wonderful—Uniformity and variety interwoven in the works of nature with surprising art; especially in man—Still there is here, a great diversity—Natural objects hence form themselves into groups, and are always agreeable.

IN things of Nature's workmanship, whether we regard their internal or external structure, beauty and design are equally conspicuous. We shall begin with the outside of nature, as what first presents itself.

The figure of an organic body is generally regular. The trunk of a tree, its branches, and their ramifications, are nearly round, and form a series regularly decreasing from the trunk to the smallest fibre: uniformity is no where more remarkable than in the leaves, which, in the same species, have all the same color, size, and shape: the seeds and fruits are all regular figures, approaching for the most part to the globular form. Hence a plant, especially of the larger kind, with its trunk, branches, foliage, and fruit, is a charming object.

In an animal, the trunk, which is much larger than the other parts, occupies a chief place: its shape, like that of the stem of plants, is nearly round; a figure which of all is the most agreeable: its two sides are precisely similar: several of the under parts go off in pairs; and the two individuals of each pair are accurately uniform: the single parts are placed in the middle: the limbs bearing a certain proportion to the trunk, serve to support it, and to give it a proper elevation: upon one extremity are disposed the neck and head, in the direction of the trunk: the head being the chief part, possesses with great propriety the chief place. Hence, the beauty of the whole figure, is the result of many equal and proportional parts orderly disposed; and the smallest variation in number, equality, proportion, or order, never fails to produce a perception of deformity.

Nature in no particular seems more profuse of ornament, than in the beautiful coloring of her works. The flowers of plants, the furs of beasts, and the feathers of birds, vie with each other in the beauty of their colors, which in lustre as well as in harmony are beyond the power of imitation. Of all natural appearances, the coloring of the human face is the most exquisite: it is the strongest instance of the ineffable art of nature, in adapting and proportioning its colors to the magnitude, figure, and position, of the parts. In a word, color seems to live in nature only, and to languish under the finest touches of art.

When we examine the internal structure of a plant or animal, a wonderful subtlety of mechanism is displayed. Man, in his mechanical operations, is confined to the surface of bodies; but the operations of nature are exerted through the whole substance, so as to reach even the elementary parts. Thus the body of an animal, and of a plant, are composed of certain great vessels; these of smaller; and these again of still smaller, without end, as far as we can discover. This power of diffusing mechanism through the most intimate parts, is peculiar to nature, and distinguishes her operations, most remarkably, from every work of art. Such texture, continued from the grosser parts to the most minute, preserves all along the strictest regularity. The fibres of plants are a bundle of cylindric canals, lying in the same direction, and parallel or nearly parallel to each other: in some instances, a most accurate arrangement of parts is discovered, as in onions, formed of concentric coats, one within another, to the very centre. An animal body is still more admirable, in the disposition of its internal parts, and in their order and symmetry; there is not a bone, a muscle, a blood-vessel, a nerve, that has not one corresponding to it on the opposite side; and the same order is carried through the most minute parts: the lungs are composed of two parts, which are disposed upon the sides of the thorax; and the kidneys, in a lower situation, have a position no less orderly: as to the parts that are single, the heart is advantageously situated near the middle; the liver, stomach, and spleen, are disposed in the upper region of the abdomen, about the same height; the bladder is placed in the middle of the body, as well as the intestinal canal, which fills the whole cavity with its convolutions.

The mechanical power of nature, not confined to small bodies, reaches equally those of the greatest size; witness the bodies that compose the solar system, which, however large, are weighed, measured, and subjected to certain laws, with the utmost accuracy. Their places round the sun, with their distances, are determined by a precise rule, corresponding to their quantity of matter. The superior dignity of the central body, in respect of its bulk and lucid appearance, is suited to the place it occupies. The globular figure of these bodies, is not only in itself beautiful, but is above all others fitted for regular motion. Each planet revolves about its own axis in a given time; and each moves round the sun, in an orbit nearly circular, and in a time proportioned to its distance. Their velocities, directed by an established law, are perpetually changing by regular accelerations and retardations. In fine, the great variety of regular appearances, joined with the beauty of the system itself, cannot fail to produce the highest delight in every one who is sensible of design, power, or beauty.

Nature has a wonderful power of connecting systems with each other, and of propagating that connection through all her works. Thus the constituent parts of a plant, the roots, the stem, the branches, the leaves, the fruit, are really different systems, united by a mutual dependence on each other: in an animal, the lymphatic and lacteal ducts, the blood-vessels and nerves, the muscles and

glands, the bones and cartilages, the membranes and bowels with the other organs, form distinct systems, which are united into one whole. There are, at the same time, other connections less intimate: every plant is joined to the earth by its roots; it requires rain and dews to furnish it with juices; and it requires heat to preserve these juices in fluidity and motion: every animal, by its gravity, is connected with the earth, with the element in which it breathes, and with the sun, by deriving from it cherishing and enlivening heat: the earth furnishes aliment to plants, these to animals, and these again to other animals, in a long train of dependence. That the earth is part of a greater system, comprehending many bodies mutually attracting each other, and gravitating all toward one common centre, is now thoroughly explored. Such a regular and uniform series of connections, propagated through so great a number of beings, and through such wide spaces, is wonderful: and our wonder must increase, when we observe these connections propagated from the minutest atoms to bodies of the most enormous size, and so widely diffused as that we can neither perceive their beginning nor their end. That these connections are not confined within our own planetary system, is certain: they are diffused over spaces still more remote, where new bodies and systems rise without end. All space is filled with the works of God, which are conducted by one plan, to answer unerringly one great end.

But the most wonderful connection of all, though not the most conspicuous, is that of our internal frame with the works of nature: man is obviously fitted for contemplating these works, because in this contemplation he has great delight. The works of nature are remarkable in their uniformity no less than in their variety; and the mind of man is fitted to receive pleasure equally from both. Uniformity and variety are interwoven in the works of nature with surprising art: variety, however great, is never without some degree of uniformity; nor the greatest uniformity without some degree of variety: there is great variety in the same plant, by the different appearances of its stem, branches, leaves, blossoms, fruit, size, and color; and yet, when we trace that variety through different plants, especially of the same kind, there is discovered a surprising uniformity: again, where nature seems to have intended the most exact uniformity, as among individuals of the same kind, there still appears a diversity, which serves readily to distinguish one individual from another. It is indeed admirable, that the human visage, in which uniformity is so prevalent, should yet be so marked, as to leave no room, among millions, for mistaking one person for another: these marks, though clearly perceived, are generally so delicate, that words cannot be found to describe them. A correspondence so perfect between the human mind and the works of nature, is extremely remarkable. The opposition between variety and uniformity is so great, that one would not readily imagine they could both be relished by the same palate; at least not in the same object, nor at the same time: it is however true, that the pleasures they afford, being happily adjusted to each other, and readily mixing in intimate

union, are frequently produced by the same individual object. Nay, farther, in the objects that touch us the most, uniformity and variety are constantly combined; witness natural objects, where this combination is always found in perfection. Hence it is, that natural objects readily form themselves into groups, and are agreeable in whatever manner combined: a wood with its trees, shrubs, and herbs, is agreeable: the music of birds, the lowing of cattle, and the murmuring of a brook, are in conjunction delightful; though they strike the ear without modulation or harmony. In short, nothing can be more happily accommodated to the inward constitution of man, than that mixture of uniformity with variety, which the eye discovers in natural objects; and, accordingly, the mind is never more highly gratified than in contemplating a natural landscape.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONGRUITY AND PROPRIETY.

Congruity and propriety not applicable to one object—Man has a sense of congruity and propriety—They are agreeable, because man is so formed—Congruity and propriety required, in proportion to the relation between things—No coincidence between congruity and beauty—Distinction between congruity and propriety—A great degree of congruity between a part and the whole—Principal and accessory, mean appearance—Congruity relates to kind, as well as to quantity of ornament—A slight impropriety, makes a stronger impression than a slight incongruity—The improprieties which excite laughter and contempt, ridiculous—A mixed emotion consists of one too risible for anger, and too serious for derision—The effect of contempt for another upon ourselves—Congruity, as its final cause, contributes to our happiness—Impropriety furnishes entertainment—It makes us cautious—It prompts to moral conduct—Propriety regulates our actions—It induces justice to ourselves and others—It enforces the performance of social duties.

MAN is superior to the brute, not more by his rational faculties, than by his senses. With respect to external senses, brutes probably yield not to men; and they may also have some obscure perception of beauty: but the more delicate senses of regularity, order, uniformity, and congruity, being connected with morality and religion, are reserved to dignify the chief of the terrestrial creation. Upon that account, no discipline is more suitable to man, nor more *congruous* to the dignity of his nature, than that which refines his taste, and leads him to distinguish, in every subject, what is regular, what is orderly, what is suitable, and what is fit and proper.\*

\* Nec vero illa parva vis naturæ est rationisque, quod unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat in factis dictisque, qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal, pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit. Quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem, in consiliis factisque conservandum putat, cavetque ne quid indecore effeminatere faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinose aut faciat aut cogitet. Quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quaerimus, honestam. *Cicero de Officiis*, l. 1.

Nor is it a trifling power of nature and of reason that this animal alone understands order, decency in words and deeds, and propriety of manner. No other

It is clear from the very conception of the terms *congruity* and *propriety*, that they are not applicable to any single object: they imply a plurality, and obviously signify a particular *relation* between different objects. Thus we say currently, that a decent garb is suitable or *proper* for a judge, modest behavior for a young woman, and a lofty style for an epic poem: and, on the other hand, that it is unsuitable or *incongruous* to see a little woman sunk in an overgrown farthingale, a coat richly embroidered covering coarse and dirty linen, a mean subject in an elevated style, an elevated subject in a mean style, a first minister darning his wife's stocking, or a reverend prelate in lawn sleeves dancing a hornpipe.

The perception we have of this relation, which seems peculiar to man, cannot proceed from any other cause, than from a *sense* of congruity or propriety; for, supposing us destitute of that sense, the terms would be to us unintelligible.\*

It is matter of experience, that congruity or propriety, wherever perceived, is agreeable; and that incongruity or impropriety, wherever perceived, is disagreeable. The only difficulty is, to ascertain what are the particular objects that in conjunction suggest these relations; for there are many objects that do not: the sea, for example, viewed in conjunction with a picture, or a man viewed in conjunction with a mountain, suggest not either congruity or incongruity. It seems natural to infer, what will be found true by induction, that we never perceive congruity nor incongruity but among things that are connected by some relation; such as a man and his actions, a principal and its accessories, a subject and its ornaments. We are, indeed, so framed by nature, as, among things so connected, to require a certain suitableness or correspondence, termed *congruity* or *propriety*; and to be displeased when we find the opposite relation of *incongruity* or *impropriety*.†

animal has an eye to perceive the beauty, agreeableness, and convenience of parts. Nature and reason, in transferring this similitude from the eyes to the mind, thinks that beauty, constancy, and order, are much more to be preserved in counsels and actions, and takes care that nothing be done indecorously or effeminately, and that, in opinions and actions, nothing libidinous should be thought or done. That, which we seek, honesty, is made up of this.

\* From many things that pass current in the world without being generally condemned, one at first view would imagine, that the sense of congruity or propriety has scarce any foundation in nature; and that it is rather an artificial refinement of those who affect to distinguish themselves from others. The fulsome panegyrics bestowed upon the great and opulent, in epistles dedicatory and other such compositions, would incline us to think so. Did there prevail in the world, it will be said, or did nature suggest, a taste of what is suitable, decent, or proper, would any good writer deal in such compositions, or any man of sense receive them without disgust? Can it be supposed that Louis XIV. of France was endued by nature with any sense of propriety, when, in a dramatic performance purposely composed for his entertainment, he suffered himself, publicly and in his presence, to be styled the greatest king ever the earth produced? These, it is true, are strong facts; but luckily they do not prove the sense of propriety to be artificial: they only prove, that the sense of propriety is at times overpowered by pride and vanity; which is no singular case, for that sometimes is the fate even of the sense of justice.

† In the chapter of beauty, qualities are distinguished into primary and secondary: and to clear some obscurity that may appear in the text, it is proper to be observed, that the same distinction is applicable to relations. Resemblance,

If things connected be the subject of congruity, it is reasonable beforehand to expect a degree of congruity proportioned to the degree of the connection. And, upon examination we find our expectation to be well founded: where the relation is intimate, as between a cause and its effect, a whole and its parts, we require the strictest congruity; but where the relation is slight, or accidental, as among things jumbled together, we require little or no congruity: the strictest propriety is required in behavior and manner of living; because a man is connected with these by the relation of cause and effect: the relation between an edifice and the ground upon which it stands is of the most intimate kind, and therefore the situation of a great house ought to be lofty: its relation to neighboring hills, rivers, plains, being that of propinquity only, demands but a small share of congruity: among members of the same club, the congruity ought to be considerable, as well as among things placed for show in the same niche: among passengers in a stage-coach we require very little congruity; and less still at a public spectacle.

Congruity is so nearly allied to beauty, as commonly to be had a species of it; and yet they differ so essentially, as never to coincide: beauty, like color, is placed upon a single subject; congruity upon a plurality: farther, a thing beautiful in itself, may, with relation to other things, produce the strongest sense of incongruity.

Congruity and propriety are commonly reckoned synonymous terms; and hitherto in opening the subject they have been used indifferently: but they are distinguishable; and the precise meaning of each must be ascertained. Congruity is the genus, of which propriety is a species; for we call nothing *propriety*, but that congruity or suitableness, which ought to subsist between sensible beings, and their thoughts, words, and actions.

In order to give a full view of these secondary relations, I shall trace them through some of the most considerable primary relations. The relation of a part to the whole, being extremely intimate, demands the utmost degree of congruity: even the slightest deviation is disgusting; witness the *Lutrin*, a burlesque poem, which is closed with a serious and warm panegyric on Lamoignon, one of the king's judges:

——— Amphora cœpit  
Institui; currente rota, cur urceus exit ?\*

Examples of congruity and incongruity are furnished in plenty by the relation between a subject and its ornaments. A literary

equality, uniformity, proximity, are relations that depend not on us, but exist equally whether perceived or not; and upon that account may justly be termed *primary* relations. But there are other relations, that only appear such to us, and that have not any external existence like primary relations; which is the case of congruity, incongruity, propriety, impropriety: these may be properly termed *secondary* relations. Thus it appears from what is said in the text, that the secondary relations mentioned arise from objects connected by some primary relation. Property is an example of a secondary relation, as it exists no where but in the mind. I purchase a field or a horse: the covenant makes the primary relation; and the secondary relation built on it, is property.

\* The two-handed vessel, of a foot square, is getting in fashion—as the wheel turns, why does the pitcher disappear ?



performance intended merely for amusement is susceptible of much ornament, as well as a music-room or a playhouse; for in gayety the mind has a peculiar relish for show and decoration. The most gorgeous apparel, however improper in tragedy, is not unsuitable to opera-actors: the truth is, an opera, in its present form, is a mighty fine thing; but, as it deviates from nature in its capital circumstances, we look not for nature nor propriety in those which are accessory. On the other hand, a serious and important subject admits not much ornament;\* nor a subject that of itself is extremely beautiful: and a subject that fills the mind with its loftiness and grandeur, appears best in a dress altogether plain.

To a person of a mean appearance, gorgeous apparel is unsuitable; which beside the incongruity, shows by contrast the meanness of appearance in the strongest light. Sweetness of look and manner requires simplicity of dress joined with the greatest elegance. A stately and majestic air requires sumptuous apparel, which ought not to be gaudy, nor crowded with little ornaments. A woman of consummate beauty can bear to be highly adorned, and yet shows best in a plain dress,

—————For loveliness  
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,  
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.

*Thomson's Autumn, 208.*

Congruity regulates not only the quantity of ornament, but also the kind. The decorations of a dancing-room ought, all of them, to be gay. No picture is proper for a church but what has religion for its subject. Every ornament upon a shield should relate to war; and Virgil, with great judgment, confines the carvings upon the shield of Æneas to the military history of the Romans. that beauty is overlooked by Homer; for the bulk of the sculpture upon the shield of Achilles is of the arts of peace in general, and of joy and festivity in particular: the author of Telemachus betrays the same inattention, in describing the shield of that young hero.

In judging of propriety with regard to ornaments, we must attend, not only to the nature of the subject that is to be adorned, but also to the circumstances in which it is placed: the ornaments that are proper for a ball will appear not altogether so decent at public worship: and the same person ought to dress differently for a marriage feast and for a funeral.

Nothing is more intimately related to a man than his sentiments, words, and actions; and therefore we require here the strictest conformity. When we find what we thus require, we have a lively sense of propriety: when we find the contrary, our sense of impropriety is no less lively. Hence the universal distaste of affectation, which consists in making a show of greater delicacy and refinement, than is suited, either to the character or circumstances of the

\* Contrary to this rule, the introduction to the third volume of the *Characteristics*, is a continued chain of metaphors: these in such profusion are too florid for the subject; and have beside the bad effect of removing our attention from the principal subject, to fix it upon splendid trifles.



person. Nothing in epic or dramatic compositions is more disgusting than impropriety of manners. In Corneille's tragedy of *Cinna*, Æmilia, a favourite of Augustus, receives daily marks of his affection, and is loaded with benefits: yet all the while is laying plots to assassinate her benefactor, directed by no other motive but to avenge her father's death:\* revenge against a benefactor, founded solely upon filial piety, cannot be directed by any principle but that of justice, and therefore never can suggest unlawful means; yet the crime here attempted, a treacherous murder, is what even a miscreant will scarcely attempt against his bitterest enemy.

What is said might be thought sufficient to explain the relations of congruity and propriety. And yet the subject is not exhausted: on the contrary, the prospect enlarges upon us, when we take under view the effects these relations produce in the mind. Congruity and propriety, wherever perceived, appear agreeable; and every agreeable object produces in the mind a pleasant emotion: incongruity and impropriety, on the other hand, are disagreeable; and of course produce painful emotions. These emotions, whether pleasant or painful, sometimes vanish without any consequence; but more frequently occasion other emotions, to which I proceed.

When any slight incongruity is perceived in an accidental combination of persons or things, as of passengers in a stage-coach, or of individuals dining at an ordinary; the painful emotion of incongruity, after a momentary existence, vanishes without producing any effect. But this is not the case of propriety and impropriety: voluntary acts, whether words or deeds, are imputed to the author; when proper, we reward him with our esteem; when improper, we punish him with our contempt. Let us suppose, for example, a generous action suited to the character of the author, which raises in him and in every spectator the pleasant emotion of propriety: this emotion generates in the author both self-esteem and joy; the former when he considers his relation to the action, and the latter when he considers the good opinion that others will entertain of him: the same emotion of propriety produces in the spectators esteem for the author of the action; and when they think of themselves, it also produces by contrast an emotion of humility. To discover the effects of an unsuitable action, we must invert each of these circumstances: the painful emotion of impropriety generates in the author of the action both humility and shame; the former when he considers his relation to the action, and the latter when he considers what others will think of him; the same emotion of impropriety produces in the spectators contempt for the author of the action; and it also produces, by contrast when they think of themselves, an emotion of self-esteem. Here then are many different emotions, derived from the same action considered in different views by different persons—a machine provided with many springs, and not a little complicated. Propriety of action, it would seem, is a favourite of Nature, or of the Author of Nature, when such care and solicitude is bestowed on it. It is not left to our own choice; but, like

\* See Act I Sc. 2.

justice, is required at our hands; and, like justice, is enforced by natural rewards and punishments: a man cannot, with impunity, do any thing unbecoming or improper; he suffers the chastisement of contempt inflicted by others, and of shame inflicted by himself. An apparatus so complicated, and so singular, ought to rouse our attention: for nature does nothing in vain; and we may conclude with certainty, that this curious branch of the human constitution is intended for some valuable purpose. To the discovery of that purpose or final cause I shall with ardor apply my thoughts, after discoursing a little more at large upon the punishment, as it may now be called, that nature has provided for indecent and unbecoming behavior. This, at any rate, is necessary, in order to give a full view of the subject; and who knows whether it may not, over and above, open some track that will lead us to the final cause of which we are in quest?

A gross impropriety is punished with contempt and indignation, which are vented against the offender by external expressions: nor is even the slightest impropriety suffered to pass without some degree of contempt. But there are improprieties of the slighter kind, that provoke laughter; of which we have examples without end in the blunders and absurdities of our own species: such improprieties receive a different punishment, as will appear by what follows. The emotions of contempt and of laughter occasioned by an impropriety of that kind, uniting intimately in the mind of the spectator, are expressed externally by a peculiar sort of laugh, termed *a laugh of derision* or *scorn*\*. An impropriety that thus moves not only contempt but laughter, is distinguished by the epithet of *ridiculous*; and a laugh of derision or scorn is the punishment provided for it by nature. Nor ought it to escape observation, that we are so fond of inflicting that punishment, as sometimes to exert it even against creatures of an inferior species: witness a turkeycock swelling with pride, and strutting with displayed feathers, which in a gay mood is apt to provoke a laugh of derision.

We must not expect, that these different improprieties are separated by distinct boundaries: for of improprieties, from the slightest to the most gross, from the most risible to the most serious, there are degrees without end. Hence it is, that in viewing some unbecoming actions, too risible for anger, and too serious for derision; the spectator feels a sort of mixt emotion, partaking both of derision and of anger; which accounts for an expression, common with respect to the impropriety of some actions, that we know not whether to laugh or be angry.

It cannot fail to be observed, that in the case of a risible impropriety, which is always slight, the contempt we have for the offender is extremely faint, though derision, its gratification, is extremely pleasant. This disproportion between a passion and its gratification, may seem not conformable to the analogy of nature. In looking about for a solution, I reflect upon what is laid down above, that an improper action not only moves our contempt for the author, but

\* See Chap. 7.

also, by means of contrast, swells the good opinion we have of ourselves. This contributes, more than any other particular, to the pleasure we have in ridiculing follies and absurdities; and accordingly, it is well known, that those who have the greatest share of vanity are the most prone to laugh at others. Vanity, which is a vivid passion, pleasant in itself, and not less so in its gratification, would singly be sufficient to account for the pleasure of ridicule, without borrowing any aid from contempt. Hence appears the reason of a noted observation, that we are the most disposed to ridicule the blunders and absurdities of others, when we are in high spirits; for in high spirits, self-conceit displays itself with more than ordinary vigor.

Having with wary steps traced an intricate road, not without danger of wandering; what remains to complete our journey, is to account for the final cause of congruity and propriety, which make so great a figure in the human constitution. One final cause, regarding congruity, is pretty obvious, that the sense of congruity, as one principle of the fine arts, contributes, in a remarkable degree, to our entertainment; which is the final cause assigned above for our sense of proportion,\* and need not be enlarged upon here. Congruity, indeed, with respect to quantity coincides with proportion: when the parts of a building are nicely adjusted to each other, it may be said indifferently, that it is agreeable by the congruity of its parts, or by the proportion of its parts. But propriety, which regards voluntary agents only, can never be the same with proportion: a very long nose is disproportioned, but cannot be termed *improper*. In some instances, it is true, impropriety coincides with disproportion in the same subject, but never in the same respect. I give for an example, a very little man buckled to a long toledo: considering the man and the sword with respect to size, we perceive a disproportion: considering the sword as the choice of the man, we perceive an impropriety.

The sense of impropriety with respect to mistakes, blunders, and absurdities, is evidently calculated for the good of mankind. In the spectators it is productive of mirth and laughter, excellent recreation in an interval from business. But this is a trifle compared to what follows. It is painful to be the subject of ridicule; and to punish with ridicule the man who is guilty of an absurdity, tends to put him more on his guard in time to come. It is well ordered, that even the most innocent blunder is not committed with impunity: because, were errors licensed where they do no hurt, inattention would grow into habit, and be the occasion of much hurt.

The final cause of propriety, as to moral duties, is of all the most illustrious. To have a just notion of it, the moral duties that respect others must be distinguished from those that respect ourselves. Fidelity, gratitude, and abstinence from injury, are examples of the first sort; temperance, modesty, firmness of mind, are examples of the other: the former are made duties by the sense of justice; the latter, by the sense of propriety. Here is a final cause of the

\* See Chap. 3.

sense of propriety that will rouse our attention. It is undoubtedly the interest of every man to suit his behavior to the dignity of his nature, and to the station allotted him by Providence; for such rational conduct contributes in every respect to happiness, by preserving health, by procuring plenty, by gaining the esteem of others, and, which of all is the greatest blessing, by gaining a justly founded self-esteem. But in a matter so essential to our well-being, even self-interest is not relied on: the powerful authority of duty is superadded to the motive of interest. The God of nature, in all things essential to our happiness, has observed one uniform method: to keep us steady in our conduct, he has fortified us with natural laws and principles, preventive of many aberrations, which would daily happen were we totally surrendered to so fallible a guide as is human reason. Propriety cannot rightly be considered in another light than as the natural law that regulates our conduct with respect to ourselves; as justice is the natural law that regulates our conduct with respect to others. I call propriety a law, no less than justice; because both are equally rules of conduct that *ought* to be obeyed: propriety includes that obligation; for to say an action is proper, is in other words to say, that it *ought* to be performed; and to say it is improper, is in other words to say, that it *ought* to be forborne. It is that very character of *ought* and *should* which makes justice a law to us; and the same character is applicable to propriety, though perhaps more faintly than to justice. but the difference is in degree only, not in kind; and we ought, without hesitation or reluctance, to submit equally to the government of both.

But I have more to urge upon that head. To the sense of propriety as well as of justice, are annexed the sanctions of rewards and punishments; which evidently prove the one to be a law as well as the other. The satisfaction a man has in doing his duty, joined to the esteem and good-will of others, is the reward that belongs to both equally. The punishments also, though not the same, are nearly allied; and differ in degree more than in quality. Disobedience to the law of justice is punished with remorse; disobedience to the law of propriety, with shame, which is remorse in a lower degree. Every transgression of the law of justice raises indignation in the beholder; and so does every flagrant transgression of the law of propriety. Slighter improprieties receive a milder punishment: they are always rebuked with some degree of contempt, and frequently with derision. In general, it is true, that the rewards and punishments annexed to the sense of propriety are slighter in degree than those annexed to the sense of justice; which is wisely ordered, because duty to others is still more essential to society than duty to ourselves: society, indeed, could not subsist a moment, were individuals not protected from the headstrong and turbulent passions of their neighbors.

The final cause now unfolded of the sense of propriety, must, to every discerning eye, appear delightful: and yet this is but a partial view; for that sense reaches another illustrious end, which is, in conjunction with the sense of justice, to enforce the performance of

social duties. In fact, the sanctions visibly contrived to compel a man to be just to himself, are equally serviceable to compel him to be just to others; which will be evident from a single reflection, that an action, by being unjust, ceases not to be improper: an action never appears more eminently improper, than when it is unjust: it is obviously becoming, and suitable to human nature, that each man do his duty to others; and, accordingly, every transgression of duty to others, is at the same time a transgression of duty to one's self. This is a plain truth without exaggeration; and it opens a new and enchanting view in the moral landscape, the prospect being greatly enriched by the multiplication of agreeable objects. It appears now, that nothing is overlooked, nothing left undone, that can possibly contribute to the enforcing of social duty; for to all the sanctions that belong to it singly, are superadded the sanctions of self-duty. A familiar example shall suffice for illustration. An act of ingratitude, considered in itself, is to the author disagreeable, as well as to every spectator; considered by the author with relation to himself, it raises self-contempt: considered by him with relation to the world, it makes him ashamed: considered by others, it raises their contempt and indignation against the author. These feelings are all of them occasioned by the impropriety of the action. When the action is considered as unjust, it occasions another set of feelings: in the author it produces remorse, and a dread of merited punishment; and in others, the benefactor chiefly, indignation and hatred directed to the ungrateful person. Thus shame and remorse united in the ungrateful person, and indignation united with hatred in the hearts of others, are the punishments provided by nature for injustice. Stupid and insensible must he be, who, in a contrivance so exquisite, perceives not the benevolent hand of our Creator.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DIGNITY AND GRACE.

The terms *dignity* and *meanness*, applied to man, in point of character, sentiment, and behavior—Dignity and meanness belong to sensible beings only—Actions appear in themselves grand or little; with respect to the authors, proper or improper; with respect to those affected by them, just or unjust—Dignity and meanness, founded on man's natural sense of the excellence of his nature—Actions corresponding to the dignity of man, manly; the contrary, childish—Courage held in higher estimation than justice—Of pleasures, organic are the lowest, those of the eye and the ear are higher, and those of the understanding the highest—Final cause of corporeal pleasures—The pleasures of the eye and the ear are of utility—The social pleasures qualify a man for society—The high rank of the pleasures of the understanding with respect to time and eternity—Grace, as displayed externally, is an object of one only of the five senses—It belongs exclusively to man—The definition of grace—A graceful person, of all external objects, the most agreeable—Dancing affords great opportunity for displaying grace; and haranguing still greater—A person deficient in amiable qualities, cannot be graceful.

THE terms *dignity* and *meanness* are applied to man in point of character, sentiment, and behavior: we say, for example, of one man,

that he has natural dignity in his air and manner; of another, that he makes a mean figure: we perceive dignity in every action and sentiment of some persons; meanness and vulgarity in the actions and sentiments of others. With respect to the fine arts, some performances are said to be manly, and suitable to the dignity of human nature; others are termed low, mean, trivial. Such expressions are common, though they have not always a precise meaning. With respect to the art of criticism, it must be a real acquisition to ascertain what these terms truly import; which possibly may enable us to rank every performance in the fine arts according to its dignity.

Inquiring first to what subjects the terms *dignity* and *meanness* are appropriated, we soon discover, that they are not applicable to any thing inanimate: the most magnificent palace that ever was built, may be lofty, may be grand, but it has no relation to dignity: the most diminutive shrub may be little, but it is not mean. These terms must belong to sensitive beings, probably to man only; which will be evident when we advance in the inquiry

Human actions appear in many different lights: in themselves they appear grand or little; with respect to the author, they appear proper or improper; with respect to those affected by them, just or unjust: and I now add, that they are also distinguished by dignity and meanness. If any one incline to think, that, with respect to human actions, dignity coincides with grandeur, and meanness with littleness, the difference will be evident upon reflecting, that an action may be grand without being virtuous, and little without being faulty; but that we never attribute dignity to any action but what is virtuous, nor meanness to any but what is faulty. Every action of dignity creates respect and esteem for the author; and a mean action draws upon him contempt. A man is admired for a grand action, but frequently is neither loved nor esteemed for it: neither is a man always contemned for a low or little action. The action of Cæsar passing the Rubicon was grand; but there was no dignity in it, considering that his purpose was to enslave his country. Cæsar, in a march, taking opportunity of a rivulet to quench his thirst, did a low action, but the action was not mean.

As it appears to me, dignity and meanness are founded on a natural principle not hitherto mentioned. Man is endowed with a SENSE of the worth and excellence of his nature: he deems it more perfect than that of the other beings around him; and he perceives, that the perfection of his nature consists in virtue, particularly in virtues of the highest rank. To express that sense, the term *dignity* is appropriated. Farther, to behave with dignity, and to refrain from all mean actions, is felt to be, not a virtue only, but a duty: it is a duty every man owes to himself. By acting in that manner, he attracts love and esteem: by acting meanly, or below himself, he is disapproved and contemned.

According to the description here given of dignity and meanness, they appear to be a species of propriety and impropriety. Many actions may be proper or improper, to which dignity or meanness cannot be applied: to eat when one is hungry, is proper, but there is



no dignity in that action: revenge fairly taken, if against law, is improper, but not mean. But every action of dignity is also proper, and every mean action is also improper.

This sense of the dignity of human nature, reaches even our pleasures and amusements: if they enlarge the mind by raising grand or elevated emotions, or if they humanize the mind by exercising our sympathy, they are approved as suited to the dignity of our nature: if they contract the mind by fixing it on trivial objects, they are condemned as not suited to the dignity of our nature. Hence, in general, every occupation, whether of use or amusement, that corresponds to the dignity of man, is termed *manly*; and every occupation below his nature, is termed *childish*.

To those who study human nature, there is a point which has always appeared intricate: how comes it that generosity and courage are more esteemed, and bestow more dignity, than good nature, or even justice; though the latter contributes more than the former to private as well as to public happiness? This question, bluntly proposed, might puzzle a cunning philosopher; but, by means of the foregoing observations, will easily be solved. Human virtues, like other objects, obtain a rank in our estimation, not from their utility, which is a subject of reflection, but from the direct impression they make on us. Justice and good nature are a sort of negative virtues, that scarcely make any impression but when they are transgressed. courage and generosity, on the contrary, producing elevated emotions, enliven greatly the sense of a man's dignity, both in himself and in others; and for that reason, courage and generosity are in higher regard than the other virtues mentioned: we describe them as grand and elevated, as of greater dignity, and more praiseworthy.

This leads us to examine more directly emotions and passions with respect to the present subject; and it will not be difficult to form a scale of them, beginning with the meanest, and ascending gradually to those of the highest rank and dignity. Pleasure felt as the organ of sense, named *corporeal pleasure*, is perceived to be low; and when indulged to excess, is perceived also to be mean: for that reason, persons of any delicacy dissemble the pleasure they take in eating and drinking. The pleasures of the eye and ear, having no organic feeling,\* and being free from any sense of meanness, are indulged without any shame: they even rise to a certain degree of dignity when their objects are grand or elevated. The same is the case of the sympathetic passions: a virtuous person behaving with fortitude and dignity under cruel misfortunes, makes a capital figure; and the sympathizing spectator feels in himself the same dignity. Sympathetic distress at the same time never is mean: on the contrary, it is agreeable to the nature of a social being, and has general approbation. The rank that love possesses in the scale, depends in a great measure on its object: it possesses a low place when founded on external properties merely; and is mean when bestowed on a person of inferior rank without any extraordinary qualification: but when founded on the more elevated internal properties, it assumes a con-

\* See the Introduction.



siderable degree of dignity. The same is the case of friendship. When gratitude is warm, it animates the mind; but it scarcely rises to dignity. Joy bestows dignity when it proceeds from an elevated cause.

If I can depend upon induction, dignity is not a property of any disagreeable passion: one is slight, another severe; one depresses the mind, another animates it; but there is no elevation, far less dignity, in any of them. Revenge, in particular, though it inflame and swell the mind, is not accompanied with dignity, not even with elevation: it is not, however, felt as mean or groveling, unless when it takes indirect measures for gratification. Shame and remorse, though they sink the spirits, are not mean. Pride, a disagreeable passion, bestows no dignity in the eye of a spectator. Vanity always appears mean; and extremely so where founded, as commonly happens, on trivial qualifications.

I proceed to the pleasures of the understanding, which possess a high rank in point of dignity. Of this every one will be sensible, when he considers the important truths that have been laid open by science; such as general theorems, and the general laws that govern the material and moral worlds. The pleasures of the understanding are suited to man as a rational and contemplative being; and they tend not a little to ennoble his nature; even to the Deity he stretches his contemplations, which, in the discovery of infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence, afford delight of the most exalted kind. Hence it appears, that the fine arts studied as a rational science, afford entertainment of great dignity; superior far to what they afford as a subject of taste merely.

But contemplation, however in itself valuable, is chiefly respected as subservient to action; for man is intended to be more an active than a contemplative being. He accordingly shows more dignity in action than in contemplation: generosity, magnanimity, heroism, raise his character to the highest pitch: these best express the dignity of his nature, and advance him nearer to divinity than any other of his attributes.

By every production that shows art and contrivance, our curiosity is excited upon two points; first, how it was made; and, next, to what end. Of the two, the latter is the more important inquiry, because the means are ever subordinate to the end; and, in fact, our curiosity is always more inflamed by the *final* than by the *efficient* cause. This preference is no where more visible, than in contemplating the works of nature: if in the efficient cause wisdom and power be displayed, wisdom is no less conspicuous in the final cause; and from it only can we infer benevolence, which of all the divine attributes is to man the most important.

Having endeavored to assign the efficient cause of dignity and meanness, by unfolding the principle on which they are founded, we proceed to explain the final cause of the dignity or meanness bestowed upon the several particulars above mentioned, beginning with corporeal pleasures. These, as far as usual, are, like justice, fenced with sufficient sanctions to prevent their being neglected: hunger and thirst are painful sensations; and we are incited to ani

mal love by a vigorous propensity: were corporeal pleasures dignified over and above with a place in a high class, they would infallibly disturb the balance of the mind, by outweighing the social affections. This is a satisfactory final cause for refusing to these pleasures any degree of dignity: and the final cause is no less evident of their meanness, when they are indulged to excess. The more refined pleasures of external sense, conveyed by the eye and the ear from natural objects and from the fine arts, deserve a high place in our esteem, because of their singular and extensive utility: in some cases they rise to a considerable dignity; and the very lowest pleasures of the kind are never esteemed mean or grovelling. The pleasure arising from wit, humor, ridicule, or from what is simply ludicrous, is useful, by relaxing the mind after the fatigue of more manly occupation: but the mind, when it surrenders itself to pleasure of that kind, loses its vigor, and sinks gradually into sloth.\* The place this pleasure occupies in point of dignity, is adjusted to these views: to make it useful as a relaxation, it is not branded with meanness; to prevent its usurpation, it is removed from that place but a single degree: no man values himself for that pleasure, even during gratification; and if it have engrossed more of his time than is requisite for relaxation, he looks back with some degree of shame.

In point of dignity, the social emotions rise above the selfish, and much above those of the eye and ear: man is by his nature a social being; and to qualify him for society, it is wisely contrived, that he should value himself more for being social than selfish.†

The excellency of man is chiefly discernible in the great improvements of which he is susceptible in society: these, by perseverance, may be carried on progressively above any assignable limits; and, even abstracting from revelation, there is great probability, that the progress begun here will be completed in some future state. Now, as all valuable improvements proceed from the exercise of our rational faculties, the author of our nature, in order to excite us to a due use of these faculties, has assigned a high rank to the pleasures of the understanding: their utility, with respect to this life as well as a future, entitles them to that rank.

But as action is the aim of all our improvements, virtuous actions justly possess the highest of all the ranks. These, we find, are by nature distributed into different classes, and the first in point of dignity assigned to actions that appear not the first in point of use: generosity, for example, in the sense of mankind is more respected than justice, though the latter is undoubtedly more essential to soci-

\* Neque enim ita generati à natura sumus, ut ad ludum et jocum facti esse videamur, sed ad severitatem potius et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora. Ludo autem et joco, uti illis quidem licet, sed sicut somno et quietibus cæteris, tum cum gravibus seriisque rebus satisfecerimus. *Cicero de offic. lib. I.*

Nor are we so constituted by nature as to seem made for sport and jest; but rather for severity, and the graver and higher studies. It is only proper for us to use sport and jest as we do sleep and other repose, after the satiety of grave and serious things.

† For the same reason, the selfish emotions that are founded upon a social principle, rise higher in our esteem than those that are founded upon a selfish principle. As to which see above, p. 47. note.

ety; and magnanimity, heroism, undaunted courage, rise still higher in our esteem. One would readily think, that the moral virtues should be esteemed according to their importance. Nature has here deviated from her ordinary path, and great wisdom is shown in the deviation: the efficient cause is explained above, and the final cause is explained in the *Essays of Morality and Natural Religion*.\*

We proceed to analyse *grace*, which being in a good measure an uncultivated field, requires more than ordinary labor.

*Graceful* is an attribute: *grace* and *gracefulness* express that attribute in the form of a noun.

That this attribute is agreeable, no one doubts.

As *grace* is displayed externally, it must be an object of one or other of our five senses. That it is an object of sight, every person of taste can bear witness; and that it is confined to that sense, appears from induction; for it is not an object of smell, nor of taste, nor of touch. Is it an object of hearing? Some music indeed is termed *graceful*; but that expression is metaphorical, as when we say of other music that it is beautiful: the latter metaphor, at the same time, is more sweet and easy; which shows how little applicable to music or to sound the former is, when taken in its proper sense.

That it is an attribute of man, is beyond dispute. But of what other beings is it also an attribute? We perceive at first sight that nothing inanimate is entitled to that epithet. What animal then, beside man, is entitled? Surely, not an elephant, nor even a lion. A horse may have a delicate shape with a lofty mien, and all his motions may be exquisite; but he is never said to be *graceful*. Beauty and grandeur are common to man with some other beings; but dignity is not applied to any being inferior to man; and upon the strictest examination, the same appears to hold in *grace*.

Confining then *grace* to man, the next inquiry is, whether, like beauty, it makes a constant appearance or in some circumstances only. Does a person display this attribute at rest as well as in motion, asleep as when awake? It is undoubtedly connected with motion; for when the most *graceful* person is at rest, neither moving nor speaking, we lose sight of that quality as much as of color in the dark. *Grace* then is an agreeable attribute, inseparable from motion as opposed to rest, and as comprehending speech, looks, gestures, and loco-motion.

As some motions are homely, the opposite to *graceful*, the next inquiry is, with what motions is this attribute connected? No man appears *graceful* in a mask; and, therefore, laying aside the expressions of the countenance, the other motions may be genteel, may be elegant, but of themselves never are *graceful*. A motion adjusted in the most perfect manner to answer its end, is elegant; but still somewhat more is required to complete our idea of *grace*, or *gracefulness*.

What this unknown *more* may be, is the nice point. One thing is clear from what is said, that this *more* must arise from the expression of the countenance: and from what expressions so naturally as from those which indicate mental qualities, such as sweetness,

benevolence, elevation, dignity? This promises to be a fair analysis; because of all objects mental qualities affect us the most; and the impression made by graceful appearance upon every spectator of taste, is too deep for any cause purely corporeal.

The next step is, to examine what are the mental qualities, that, in conjunction with elegance of motion, produce a graceful appearance. Sweetness, cheerfulness, affability, are not separately sufficient, no, even in conjunction. As it appears to me, dignity alone with elegant motion may produce a graceful appearance; but still more graceful, with the aid of other qualities, those especially that are the most exalted.

But this is not all. The most exalted virtues may be the lot of a person whose countenance has little expression: such a person cannot be graceful. Therefore, to produce this appearance, we must add another circumstance, namely, an expressive countenance, displaying to every spectator of taste, with life and energy, every thing that passes in the mind.

Collecting these circumstances together, grace may be defined, that agreeable appearance which arises from elegance of motion, and from a countenance expressive of dignity. Expressions of other mental qualities are not essential to that appearance, but they heighten it greatly.

Of all external objects, a graceful person is the most agreeable.

Dancing affords great opportunity for displaying grace, and haranguing still more.

I conclude with the following reflection, that in vain will a person attempt to be graceful, who is deficient in amiable qualities. A man, it is true, may form an idea of qualities of which he is destitute; and, by means of that idea, may endeavor to express these qualities by looks and gestures: but such studied expression will be too faint and obscure to be graceful.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RIDICULE.

A ridiculous object, both improper and risible—Burlesque is of two kinds; that which excites laughter, and that which excites derision—Humor connected with ridicule—It belongs to an author who pretends to be grave, but who paints his subject so as to excite laughter—Irony consists in laughing at a man under the disguise of appearing to speak well of him—The effect of parody—Ridicule the test of truth.

To define ridicule has puzzled and vexed every critic. The definition given by Aristotle is obscure and imperfect.\* Cicero handles it at great length;† but without giving any satisfaction: he wanders in the dark, and misses the distinction between risible and ridiculous. Quintilian is sensible of the distinction,‡ but has not attempted to

\* Poet. cap. 5.

† L. 2. De Oratore.

‡ Ideoque anceps ejus rei ratio est, quod a derisu non procul abest risus; lib. 6. cap. 3. § 1.

Therefore the reason of this is doubtful, that laughter is not far from ridicule.

explain it. Luckily this subject lies no longer in obscurity: a risible object produces an emotion of laughter merely:\* a ridiculous object is improper as well as risible; and produces a mixt emotion, which is vented by a laugh of derision or scorn.†

Having therefore happily unravelled the knotty part, I proceed to other particulars.

Burlesque, though a great engine of ridicule, is not confined to that subject; for it is clearly distinguishable into burlesque that excites laughter merely, and burlesque that provokes derision or ridicule. A grave subject in which there is no impropriety, may be brought down by a certain coloring so as to be risible; which is the case of *Virgil Travestie*;‡ and also the case of the *Secchia Rapita*:§ the authors laugh first, in order to make their readers laugh. The *Lutrin* is a burlesque poem of the other sort, laying hold of a low and trifling incident, to expose the luxury, indolence, and contentious spirit of a set of monks. Boileau, the author, gives a ridiculous air to the subject, by dressing it in the heroic style, and affecting to consider it as of the utmost dignity and importance. In a composition of this kind, no image professedly ludicrous ought to find quarter, because such images destroy the contrast; and, accordingly, the author shows always the grave face, and never once betrays a smile.

Though the burlesque that aims at ridicule, produces its effect by elevating the style far above the subject, yet it has limits beyond which the elevation ought not to be carried: the poet, consulting the imagination of his readers, ought to confine himself to such images as are lively, and readily apprehended: a strained elevation, soaring above an ordinary reach of fancy, makes not a pleasant impression: the reader, fatigued with being always upon the stretch, is soon disgusted; and if he persevere, becomes thoughtless and indifferent. Farther, a fiction gives no pleasure unless it be painted in colors so lively as to produce some perception of reality; which never can be done effectually where the images are formed with labor or difficulty. For these reasons, I cannot avoid condemning the *Batrachomyomachia*, said to be the composition of Homer: it is beyond the power of imagination to form a clear and lively image of frogs and mice, acting with the dignity of the highest of our species; nor can we form a conception of the reality of such an action, in any manner so distinct as to interest our affections even in the slightest degree.

The *Rape of the Lock* is of a character clearly distinguishable from those now mentioned: it is not properly a burlesque performance, but what may rather be termed an *heroic-comical poem*: it treats a gay and familiar subject with pleasantry, and with a moderate degree of dignity: the author puts not on a mask like Boileau, nor professes to make us laugh like Tassoni. The *Rape of the Lock* is a genteel species of writing, less strained than those mentioned: and is pleasant or ludicrous without having ridicule for its chief aim; giving way however to ridicule where it arises naturally from a particular character, such as that of Sir Plume. Addison's *Spec-*

\* See Chap. 7.

† See Chap. 10.

‡ Scarron.

§ Tassoni.

*tator* upon the exercise of the fan\* is extremely gay and ludicrous, resembling in its subject the *Rape of the Lock*.

Humour belongs to the present chapter, because it is connected with ridicule. Congreve defines humor to be "a singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing, peculiar and natural to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from those of other men." Were this definition just, a majestic and commanding air, which is a singular property, is humor; as also a natural flow of correct and commanding eloquence, which is no less singular. Nothing just or proper is denominated humor; nor any singularity of character, words, or actions, that is valued or respected. When we attend to the character of an humorist, we find that it arises from circumstances both risible and improper, and therefore that it lessens the man in our esteem, and makes him in some measure ridiculous.

Humor in writing is very different from humor in character. When an author insists upon ludicrous subjects with a professed purpose to make his readers laugh, he may be styled a *ludicrous writer*; but is scarcely entitled to be styled a *writer of humor*. This quality belongs to an author, who affecting to be grave and serious, paints his objects in such colors as to provoke mirth and laughter. A writer that is really an humorist in character, does this without design: if not, he must affect the character in order to succeed. Swift and Fontaine were humorists in character, and their writings are full of humor. Addison was not an humorist in character; and yet in his prose writings a most delicate and refined humor prevails. Arbuthnot exceeds them all in drollery and humorous painting; which shows a great genius, because, if I am not misinformed, he had nothing of that peculiarity in his character.

There remains to show by examples the manner of treating subjects, so as to give them a ridiculous appearance.

Il ne dit jamais, je vous donne, mais, je vous prete le bon jour. *Moliere.*

*Orleans.* I know him to be valiant.

*Constable.* I was told that by one that knows him better than you

*Orleans.* What's he?

*Constable.* Marry, he told me so himself; and he said he car'd not who knew it.  
*Henry V. Shakspeare.*

He never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. *Id.*

*Millament.* Sententious Mirabell! pr'ythee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.  
*Way of the World.*

A true critic, in the perusal of a book, is like a dog at a feast, whose thoughts and stomach are wholly set upon what the guests fling away, and consequently is apt to snarl most when there are the fewest bones. *Tale of a Tub.*

In the following instances, the ridicule arises from absurd conceptions in the persons introduced.

*Mascarille.* Te souvient-il, vicomte de cette demilune, que nous emportâmes sur les ennemis au siege d'Arras?

*Jodelet.* Que veux tu dire avec ta demi-lune ? c'étoit bien une lune tout entiere.  
*Moliere les Precieuses Ridicules, Sc. 11.*

*Slender.* I came yonder at Eaton to marry Mrs. Anne Page ; and she's a great lubberly boy.

*Page.* Upon my life then you took the wrong.

*Slender.* What need you tell me that ? I think so when I took a boy for a girl ; if I had been marry'd to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.  
*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

*Valentine.* Your blessing, Sir.

*Sir Sampson.* You've had it already, Sir ; I think I sent it you to-day in a bill for four thousand pound ; a great deal of money, Brother Foresight.

*Foresight.* Ay indeed, Sir Sampson, a great deal of money for a young man ; I wonder what can he do with it.  
*Love for Love, Act II. Sc. 7.*

*Millament.* I nauseate walking ; 'tis a country-diversion ; I lothe the country, and every thing that relates to it.

*Sir Wilful.* Indeed ! hah ! look ye, look ye, you do ? nay, 'tis like you may — here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like ; that must be confess'd indeed.

*Millament.* Ah l'etourdie ! I hate the town too.

*Sir Wilful.* Dear heart, that's much — hah ! that you should hate 'em both ! hah ! 'tis like you may ; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country — 'tis like you may be one of these, Cousine.

*Way of the World, Act IV. Sc. 4.*

*Lord Froth.* I assure you, Sir Paul, I laugh at nobody's jests but my own, or a lady's : I assure, you, Sir Paul.

*Brisk.* How ? how, my Lord ? what, affront my wit ! Let me perish, do I never say any thing worthy to be laugh'd at ?

*Lord Froth.* O foy, don't misapprehend me, I don't say so, for I often smile at your conceptions. But there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh ; 'tis such a vulgar expression of the passion ! every body can laugh. Then especially to laugh at the jest of an inferior person, or when any body else of the same quality does not laugh with one ; ridiculous ! To be pleas'd with what pleases the crowd ! Now, when I laugh I always laugh alone.

*Double Dealer, Act I. Sc. 4.*

So sharp-sighted is pride in blemishes, and so willing to be gratified, that it takes up with the very slightest improprieties : such as a blunder by a foreigner in speaking our language, especially if the blunder can bear a sense that reflects on the speaker :

*Quickly.* The young man is an honest man.

*Caius.* What shall de honest man do in my closet ? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.  
*Merry Wives of Windsor*

Love-speeches are finely ridiculed in the following passage.

Quoth he, My faith as adamantine,  
 As chains of destiny, I'll maintain ;  
 True as Apollo ever spoke,  
 Or oracle from heart of oak ;  
 And if you'll give my flame but vent,  
 Now in close hugger mugger pent,  
 And shine upon me but benignly,  
 With that one, and that other pigney,  
 The sun and day shall sooner part,  
 Than love, or you, shake off my heart ;  
 The sun that shall no more dispense  
 His own but your bright influence :  
 I'll carve your name on barks of trees,  
 With true love-knots, and flourishes ;  
 That shall infuse eternal spring,  
 And everlasting flourishing :



Drink ev'ry letter on't in stum,  
 And make it brisk champaign become.  
 Where-e'er you tread, your foot shall set  
 The primrose and the violet ;  
 All spices, perfumes, and sweet powders  
 Shall borrow from your breath their odours ;  
 Nature her charter shall renew,  
 And take all lives of things from you ;  
 The world depend upon your eye,  
 And when you frown upon it, die.  
 Only our loves shall still survive,  
 New worlds and natures to outlive ;  
 And, like to herald's moons, remain  
 All crescents, without change or wane.

*Hudibras, Part 2. canto 1*

Irony turns things into ridicule in a peculiar manner ; it consists in laughing at a man under disguise of appearing to praise or speak well of him. Swift affords us many illustrious examples of that species of ridicule. Take the following.

By these methods, in a few weeks, there starts up many a writer, capable of managing the profoundest and most universal subjects. For what though his head be empty, provided his common-place book be full ! And if you will bate him but the circumstances of method, and style, and grammar, and invention ; allow him but the common privileges of transcribing from others, and digressing from himself, as often as he shall see occasion ; he will desire no more ingredients towards fitting up a treatise that shall make a very comely figure on a bookseller's shelf, there to be preserved neat and clean, for a long eternity, adorned with the heraldry of its title, fairly inscribed on a label ; never to be thumb'd or greas'd by students, nor bound to everlasting chains of darkness in a library ; but when the fulness of time is come, shall happily undergo the trial of purgatory, in order to ascend the sky.\*

I cannot but congratulate our age on this peculiar felicity, that though we have indeed made great progress in all other branches of luxury, we are not yet debauched with any *high relish* in poetry, but are in this one taste less *wise* than our ancestors.

If the Reverend clergy shewed more concern than others, I charitably impute it to their great charge of souls ; and what confirmed me in this opinion was, that the degrees of apprehension and terror could be distinguished to be greater or less, according to their ranks and degrees in the church.†

A parody must be distinguished from every species of ridicule it enlivens a gay subject by imitating some important incident that is serious: it is ludicrous, and may be risible ; but ridicule is not a necessary ingredient. Take the following examples, the first of which refers to an expression of Moses.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care :  
 Let spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they were.

*Rape of the Lock, Canto III. 45.*

The next is in imitation of Achilles's oath in Homer.

But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,  
 (Which never more shall join its parted hair,  
 Which never more its honors shall renew,  
 Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew,)

\* Tale of a Tub, sect. 7.

† A true and faithful narrative of what passed in London during the general consternation of all ranks and degrees of mankind.

That while my nostrils draw the vital air,  
 This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.  
 He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread  
 The long-contended honors of her head.

*Ibid*, Cantic IV. 133.

The following imitates the history of Agamemnon's sceptre in Homer.

Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,  
 And drew a deadly bodkin from her side,  
 (The same, his ancient personage to deck,  
 Her great-great grandsire wore about his neck,  
 In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,  
 Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:  
 Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,  
 The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;  
 Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,  
 Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

*Ibid*, Canto V. 87.

Though ridicule, as observed above, is no necessary ingredient in a parody, yet there is no opposition between them: ridicule may be successfully employed in a parody; and a parody may be employed to promote ridicule: witness the following example with respect to the latter, in which the goddess of Dulness is addressed upon the subject of modern education:

Thou gav'st that ripeness, which so soon began,  
 And ceas'd so soon, he ne'er was boy nor man;  
 Through school and college, thy kind cloud o'ercast,  
 Safe and unseen the young Æneas past;\*  
 Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down,  
 Stunn'd with his giddy larum half the town.

*Dunciad*, B. IV. 287.

The interposition of the gods, in the manner of Homer and Virgil, ought to be confined to ludicrous subjects, which are much enlivened by such interposition handled in the form of a parody; witness the cave of Spleen, *Rape of the Lock*, canto 4.; the goddess of Discord, *Lutrin*, canto 1.; and the goddess of Indolence, canto 2.

Those who have a talent for ridicule, which is seldom united with a taste for delicate and refined beauties, are quick-sighted in improprieties; and these they eagerly grasp, in order to gratify their favorite propensity. Persons galled are provoked to maintain, that ridicule is improper for grave subjects. Subjects really grave are by no means fit for ridicule: but then it is urged against them, that when it is called in question whether a certain subject be really grave, ridicule is the only means of determining the controversy. Hence a celebrated question, whether ridicule is or is not a test of truth? I give this question a place here, because it tends to illustrate the nature of ridicule.

The question stated in accurate terms is, whether the sense of ridicule is the proper test for distinguishing ridiculous objects, from what are not so. Taking it for granted, that ridicule is not a subject of reasoning, but of sense or taste,† I proceed thus. No person

\* Æn. l. 1. *At Venus obscuro, &c.*

† See Chap. 10. compared with Chap. 7.

doubts but that our sense of beauty is the true test of what is beautiful; and our sense of grandeur, of what is great or sublime. Is it more doubtful whether our sense of ridicule be the true test of what is ridiculous? It is not only the true test, but indeed the only test; for this subject comes not, more than beauty or grandeur, under the province of reason. If any subject, by the influence of fashion or custom, have acquired a degree of veneration to which naturally it is not entitled, what are the proper means for wiping off the artificial coloring, and displaying the subject in its true light? A man of true taste sees the subject without disguise: but if he hesitate, let him apply the test of ridicule, which separates it from its artificial connections, and exposes it naked with all its native improprieties.

But it is urged, that the gravest and most serious matters may be set in a ridiculous light. Hardly so; for where an object is neither risible nor improper, it lies not open in any quarter to an attack from ridicule. But supposing the fact, I foresee not any harmful consequence. By the same sort of reasoning, a talent for wit ought to be condemned, because it may be employed to burlesque a great or lofty subject. Such irregular use made of a talent for wit or ridicule, cannot long impose upon mankind: it cannot stand the test of correct and delicate taste; and truth will at last prevail even with the vulgar. To condemn a talent for ridicule because it may be perverted to wrong purposes, is not a little ridiculous. Could one forbear to smile, if a talent for reasoning were condemned because it also may be perverted? and yet the conclusion in the latter case, would be not less just than in the former: perhaps more just; for no talent is more frequently perverted than that of reason.

We had best leave nature to her own operations: the most valuable talents may be abused, and so may that of ridicule: let us bring it under proper culture if we can, without endeavoring to pluck it up by the root. Were we destitute of this test of truth, I know not what might be the consequences: I see not what rule would be left us to prevent splendid trifles passing for matters of importance, show and form for substance, and superstition or enthusiasm for pure religion.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## WIT.

**Wit**, a quality of certain thoughts and expressions, not applicable to an action or a passion—Divided into two kinds; in the thought, and in the expression—Wit in the thought, divided into two kinds: ludicrous images; and ludicrous combinations of things—Ludicrous combinations, divided into five kinds: fanciful causes; fanciful reasoning; ludicrous junction of small things to great; joining things apparently opposite; promises, promising much, and performing nothing—Verbal wit depends upon choosing words of different significations—Verbal wit of five kinds: seeming resemblance from the double meaning of the words; a verbal antithesis, or seeming contrast, from the same cause; seeming connection from the same cause; seeming opposition from the same cause; taking words in a different meaning from what they were intended—An assertion that bears a double meaning a species of wit, called a pun.

**WIT** is a quality of certain thoughts and expressions: the term is never applied to an action nor a passion, and as little to an external object.

However difficult it may be, in many instances, to distinguish a witty thought or expression from one that is not so, yet, in general, it may be laid down, that the term *wit* is appropriated to such thoughts and expressions as are ludicrous, and also occasion some degree of surprise by their singularity. Wit also, in a figurative sense, expresses a talent for inventing ludicrous thoughts or expressions: we say commonly *a witty man*, or *a man of wit*.

Wit in its proper sense, as explained above, is distinguishable into two kinds; wit in the thought, and wit in the words or expression. Again, wit in the thought is of two kinds; ludicrous images, and ludicrous combinations of things that have little or no natural relation.

Ludicrous images that occasion surprise by their singularity, as having little or no foundation in nature, are fabricated by the imagination: and the imagination is well qualified for the office; being of all our faculties the most active, and the least under restraint. Take the following example:

*Shylock*. You knew (none so well, none so well as you) of my daughter's flight.

*Salino*. That's certain; I for my part knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

*Merchant of Venice*, Act III. Sc. 1.

The image here is undoubtedly witty. It is ludicrous: and it must occasion surprise; for having no natural foundation, it is altogether unexpected.

The other branch of wit in the thought, is that only which is taken notice of by Addison, following Locke, who defines it "to lie in the assemblage of ideas; and putting those together, with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy."<sup>\*</sup> It may be defined more concisely, and perhaps more accurately, "A junction of things by distant and fanciful relations, which surprise because they are unexpected."<sup>†</sup> The following is a proper example.

<sup>\*</sup> B. II. Ch. 11. § 2.

<sup>†</sup> See Chap. 1.

We grant although he had much wit,  
 He was very shy of using it,  
 As being loth to wear it out;  
 And therefore bore it not about,  
 Unless on holidays, or so,  
 As men their best apparel do. *Hudibras*, Canto 1.

Wit is of all the most elegant recreation: the image enters the mind with gayety, and gives a sudden flash, which is extremely pleasant. Wit thereby gently elevates without straining, raises mirth without dissoluteness, and relaxes while it entertains.

Wit in the expression, commonly called *a play of words*, being a bastard sort of wit, is reserved for the last place. I proceed to examples of wit in the thought; and first of ludicrous images.

Falstaff, speaking of his taking Sir John Coleville of the Dale:

Here he is, and here I yield him; and I beseech your Grace, let it be book'd with the rest of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top of it, Coleville kissing my foot: to the which course if I be enforc'd, if you do not all show like gilt twopences to me; and I, in the clear sky of fame, o'ershine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element, which show like pins' heads to her; believe not the word of the Noble. Therefore let me have right, and let desert mount.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act IV. Sc. 3.*

I knew, when seven justices could not take up a quarrel, but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an *if*; as, if you said so, then I said so; and they shook hands, and swore brothers; Your *if* is the only peacemaker; much virtue is in *if*. *Shakspeare.*

For there is not through all Nature, another so callous, and insensible a member, as the world's posteriors, whether you apply to it the toe or the birch.

*Preface to a Tale of a Tub.*

The war hath introduced abundance of polysyllables, which will never be able to live many more campaigns. Speculations, operations, preliminaries, ambassadors, palisadoes, communication, circumvallation, battalions, as numerous as they are, if they attack us too frequently in our coffeehouses, we shall certainly put them to flight, and cut off the rear. *Tatler*, No. 230.

### Speaking of Discord,

She never went abroad, but she brought home such a bundle of monstrous lies, as would have amazed any mortal, but such as knew her; of a whale that had swallowed a fleet of ships; of the lions being let out of the Tower to destroy the Protestant religion; of the Pope's being seen in a brandy-shop at Wapping, &c.

*History of John Bull*, Part I. Ch. 16.

The other branch of wit in the thought, namely, ludicrous combinations and oppositions, may be traced through various ramifications. And, first, fanciful causes assigned that have no natural relation to the effects produced:

*Lancaster.* Fare you well, Falstaff; I, in my condition,  
 Shall better speak of you than you deserve. *[Exit.]*

*Falstaff.* I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh; but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine. There's never any of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then, when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards; which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it: it ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, dull, and crudy vapors which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The

second property of your excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood, which before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale; which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme; it illuminateth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great, and puff'd up with his retinue, doth any deed of courage: and thus valor comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it, and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and till'd, with excellent endeavor of drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them, should be to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack.

*Second Part of Henry IV. Act IV. Sc. 7.*

The trenchant blade, toledo trusty,  
For want of fighting was grown rusty,  
And ate into itself, for lack  
Of some body to hew and hack.  
The peaceful scabbard where it dwelt,  
The rancor of its edge had felt;  
For of the lower end two handful,  
It had devoured, 'twas so manful;  
And so much scorn'd to lurk in case,  
As if it durst not show its face.

*Hudibras, Canto 1.*

### Speaking of physicians,

Le bon de cette profession est, qu'il y a parmi les morts une honnêteté, une discrétion la plus grande du monde; jamais on n'en voit se plaindre du médecin qui l'a tué.

*Le Médecin malgré lui.*

Admirez les bontes, admirez les tendresses,  
De ces vieux esclaves du sort.  
Ils ne sont jamais las d'acquérir des richesses,  
Pour ceux qui souhaitent leur mort.

*Beanda.* Lard, he has so pester'd me with flames and stuff—I think I shan't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.

*Old Bachelor, Act II. Sc. 8.*

To account for effects by such fantastical causes, being highly ludicrous, is quite improper in any serious composition. Therefore the following passage from Cowley, in his poem on the death of Sir Henry Wootton, is in a bad taste.

He did the utmost bounds of knowledge find,  
He found them not so large as was his mind.  
But, like the brave Pellæan youth, did moan,  
Because that art had no more worlds than one.  
And when he saw that he through all had past,  
He dy'd, lest he should idle grow at last.

### Fanciful reasoning:

*Falstaff.* Imbowell'd!—if thou imbowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me, and eat me to-morrow! 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit! I lie, I am no counterfeit; to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man, who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed.

*First Part, Henry IV. Act V. Sc. 4.*

*Clown.* And the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even-christian.

*Hamlet, Act V. Sc. 1.*

*Pedro* Will you have me, Lady?

*Beatrice*. No, my Lord, unless I might have another for working days. Your Grace is too costly to wear every day.

*Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II. Sc. 1.

*Jessica*. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

*Launcelot*. Truly the more to blame he; we were Christians enough before, e'en as many as could well live by one another: this making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not have a rasher on the coals for money.

*Merchant of Venice*, Act III. Sc. 5.

In western clime there is a town,  
To those that dwell therein well known;  
Therefore there needs no more be said here,  
We unto them refer our reader:

For brevity is very good

When w' are, or are not understood.

*Hudibras*, Canto I.

But Hudibras gave him a twitch,  
As quick as lightning, in the breech,  
Just in the place where honor's lodg'd,  
As wise philosophers have judg'd;  
Because a kick in that part, more  
Hurts honor, than deep wounds before.

*Ibid.* Canto III.

Ludicrous junction of small things with great, as of equal importance:

This day black omens threat the brightest fair  
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care:  
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight:  
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night:  
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law;  
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;  
Or stain her honor, or her new brocade;  
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;  
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;  
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.

*Rape of the Lock*, Canto II. 101.

One speaks the glory of the British Queen,  
And one describes a charming Indian screen.

*Ibid.* Canto III. 13.

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,  
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.  
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,  
When husbands or when lapdogs breathe their last  
Or when rich china vessels fall'n from high,  
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!

*Ibid.* Canto III. 155.

Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,  
Nor ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,  
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,  
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
As thou, sad virgin, for thy ravish'd hair.

*Ibid.* Canto IV. 3.

Joining things that in appearance are opposite. As for example, where Sir Roger de Coverley, in the Spectator, speaking of his widow,

That he would have given her a coal-pit to have kept her in clean linen; and that her finger should have sparkled with one hundred of his richest acres.

Premises that promise much and perform nothing. Cicero upon that article says,



Sed scitis esse notissimum ridiculi genus, cum aliud expectamus, aliud dicatur : hic nobismetipsis noster error risum movet.\* *De Oratore*, l. ii. cap. 63.

*Beatrice*.——With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good-will.

*Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II. Sc. 1.

*Beatrice*. I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by day-light. *Ibid.*

Le médecin que l'on m'indique  
Sait le Latin, le Grec, l'Hébreu,  
Les belles lettres, la physique,  
La chimie et la botanique.  
Chacun lui donne son aveu :  
Il auroit aussi ma pratique ;  
Mais je veux vivre encore un peu.

Again,

Vingt fois le jour le bon Grégoire  
A soin de fermer son armoire.  
De quoi pensez-vous qu'il a peur ?  
Belle demande ! Qu'un voleur  
Trouvant une facile proie,  
Ne lui ravisse tout son bien.  
Non ; Grégoire a peur qu'on ne voie  
Que dans son armoire il n'a rien.

Again,

L'athmétique Damon a cru que l'air des champs  
Réparerait en lui le ravage des ans,  
Il s'est fait, à grands frais, transporter en Bretagne.  
Or voyez ce qu'a fait l'air natal qu'il a pris !  
Damon seroit mort à Paris :  
Damon est mort à la campagne.

Having discussed wit in the thought, we proceed to what is verbal only, commonly called *a play of words*. This sort of wit depends, for the most part, upon choosing a word that has different significations: by that artifice hocus-pocus tricks are played in language, and thoughts plain and simple take on a very different appearance. Play is necessary for man, in order to refresh him after labor; and accordingly man loves play, even so much as to relish a play of words: and it is happy for us, that words can be employed, not only for useful purposes, but also for our amusement. This amusement, though humble and low, unbends the mind; and is relished by some at all times, and by all at some times.

It is remarkable, that this low species of wit, has among all nations been a favorite entertainment, in a certain stage of their progress toward refinement of taste and manners, and has gradually gone into disrepute. As soon as a language is formed into a system, and the meaning of words is ascertained with tolerable accuracy, opportunity is afforded for expressions that, by the double meaning of some words, give a familiar thought the appearance of being new; and the penetration of the reader or hearer is gratified in detecting the true sense disguised under the double meaning. That this sort of wit was in England deemed a reputable amusement, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., is vouched by the works of Shakespeare, and even by the writings of grave divines. But it cannot have

\* But you know that it is the masked kind of the ludicrous when we expect one thing and another is said—here we laugh at our own mistake.

*De Oratore*, l. ii. cap. 63

any long endurance: for as language ripens, and the meaning of words is more and more ascertained, words held to be synonymous diminish daily; and when those that remain have been more than once employed, the pleasure vanishes with the novelty.

I proceed to examples, which, as in the former case, shall be distributed into different classes.

A seeming resemblance from the double meaning of a word:

Beneath this stone my wife doth lie;  
She's now at rest, and so am I.

A seeming contrast from the same cause, termed *a verbal antithesis*, which has no despicable effect in ludicrous subjects:

While Iris his cosmetic wash would try  
To make her bloom revive, and lovers die,  
Some ask for charms, and others philters choose,  
To gall Corinna, and their quartans lose. *Dispensary, Canto 2*

And how frail nymphs, oft by abortion, aim  
To lose a substance, to preserve a name. *Ibid. Canto 3.*

While nymphs take treats, or assignations give.  
*Rape of the Lock.*

Other seeming connections from the same cause:

Will you employ your conqu'ring sword,  
To break a fiddle, and your word? *Hudibras, Canto 2.*

To whom the knight with comely grace  
Put off his hat to put his case. *Ibid. Part 3. Canto 3*

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom  
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;  
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

*Rape of the Lock, Canto 3. l. 5.*

O'er their quietus where fat judges dose,  
And lull their cough and conscience to repose.

*Dispensary, Canto 1.*

Speaking of Prince Eugene:

This general is a great taker of snuff as well as of towns.

*Pope, Key to the Lock.*

Exul mentisque domusque. *Metamorphoses, l. ix. 409.*

The exile from his mind and his home.

A seeming opposition from the same cause:

Hic quiescit qui nunquam quievit.

Here he rests, who never rested.

Again,

Quel âge a cette Iris, dont on fait tant de bruit ?  
Me demandoit Cliton naguère.  
Il faut, dis-je, vous satisfaire,  
Elle a vingt ans le jour, et cinquante ans la nuit.

Again,

So like the chances are of love and war,  
That they alone in this distinguish'd are;  
In love the victors from the vanquish'd fly,  
They fly that wound, and they pursue that die.

*Waller*

What new found witchcraft was in thee,  
With thine own cold to kindle me ?  
Strange art; like him that should devise  
To make a burning-glass of ice.

*Cowley*

Wit of this kind is unsuitable in a serious poem; witness the following line in Pope's *Elegy* to the memory of an unfortunate lady:

Cold is that breast which warm'd the world before.

This sort of writing is finely burlesqued by Swift:

Her hands the softest ever felt,  
Though cold would burn, though dry would melt.

*Stephen and Chloe.*

Taking a word in a different sense from what is meant, comes under wit, because it occasions some slight degree of surprise:

*Beatrice.* I may sit in a corner, and cry *Heigh ho!* for a husband.

*Pedro.* Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

*Beatrice.* I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

*Much Ado about Nothing, Act II. Sc. 1.*

*Falstaff.* My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

*Pistol.* Two yards and more.

*Falstaff.* No quips, now, Pistol: indeed I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, Act I. Sc. 3.*

*Lo. Sands.*——By your leave, sweet ladies,  
If I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me:  
I had it from my father.

*Anne Bullen.* Was he mad, sir!

*Sands.* O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love too;  
But he would bite none——

*K. Henry VIII.*

An assertion that bears a double meaning, one right, one wrong, but so introduced as to direct us to the wrong meaning, is a species of bastard wit, which is distinguished from all others by the name *pun*. For example,

*Paris.*——Sweet Helen, I must woo you,  
To help unarm our Hector: his stubborn buckles,  
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,  
Shall more obey, than to the edge of steel,  
Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more  
Than all the island Kings, disarm great Hector.

*Troilus and Cressida, Act III. Sc. 1.*

The pun is in the close. The word *disarm* has a double meaning; it signifies to take off a man's armor, and also to subdue him in fight. We are directed to the latter sense by the context; but, with regard to Helen, the word holds only true in the former sense. I go on with other examples:

Esse nihil dicis quicquid petis, improbe Cinna:  
Si nil, Cinna, petis, nil tibi, Cinna, nego. *Martial*, l. 3. epigr. 61.

You say, wicked Cinna, that you ask nothing—  
If you ask nothing, I deny you nothing.

Jocondus geminum imposuit tibi, Sequana pontem;  
Hunc in jure potes dicere pontificem. *Sanazarus.*

Sequana, Jocondus placed a double bridge over thee—Well mayst thou call him a bridge-maker. (Pontifex, a priest.)

N. B. *Jocondus* was a monk.

*Chief Justice.* Well! the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

*Falstaff.* He that buckles him in my belt cannot live in less.

*Chief Justice.* Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

*Falstaff.* I would it were otherwise; I would my means were greater, and my waist slenderer.

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 2.*

*Celia.* I pray you bear with me, I can go no further.

*Clown.* For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you: yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse.  
As you like it, Act II. Sc. 4.

He that imposes an oath makes it,  
Not he that for convenience takes it;  
Then how can any man be said  
To break an oath he never made? *Hudibras*, Part 2. Canto 2

The seventh satire of the first book of Horace is purposely contrived to introduce at the close a most execrable pun. Talking of some infamous wretch, whose name was *Rex Rupilius*,

Persius exclamat, Per magnos, Brute, deos te  
Oro, qui reges consueris tollere, cur non  
Hunc regem jugulas? *Operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est.*

By all the immortal gods, O Brute,  
To thee I make my fervent suit,  
Thou, that art wont, all kings to kill,  
Use this king also as you will;  
For take my word, it is the task  
Of him that bears both ax and mask.

Though playing with words is a mark of a mind at ease, and disposed to any sort of amusement, we must not thence conclude that playing with words is always ludicrous. Words are so intimately connected with thought, that if the subject be really grave, it will not appear ludicrous even in that fantastic dress. I am, however, far from recommending it in any serious performance: on the contrary, the discordance between the thought and expression must be disagreeable; witness the following specimen.

He hath abandoned his physicians, madam, under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hope: and finds no other advantage in the process, but only the losing of hope by time.  
*All's Well that Ends Well*, Act I. Sc. 1.

*K. Henry.* O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!  
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,  
What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?

*Second Part, K. Henry IV.*

If any one shall observe that there is a third species of wit, different from those mentioned, consisting in sounds merely, I am willing to give it place. And indeed it must be admitted, that many of *Hudibras's* double rhymes come under the definition of wit given in the beginning of this chapter: they are ludicrous, and their singularity occasions some degree of surprise. Swift is no less successful than Butler in this sort of wit; witness the following instances: *God—Boddice. Pliny—Nicolini. Iscariots—Chariots. Mitre—Nitre. Dragon—Suffragan.*

A repartee may happen to be witty: but it cannot be considered as a species of wit; because there are many repartees extremely smart, and yet extremely serious. I give the following example. A certain petulant Greek, objecting to Anacharsis that he was a Scythian: True, says Anacharsis, my country disgraces me, but you disgrace your country. This fine turn gives surprise; but it is far from being ludicrous.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## CUSTOM AND HABIT.

Custom and habit distinguished—Effects of habit either active or passive—The influence of habit in youth, in middle age, and in old age—Habits rise and decline gradually—Things moderately agreeable become habitual sooner than those highly agreeable; the same is applicable to pleasures of the inferior senses—Length of time as well as frequency of acts, necessary to introduce an active habit—Agreeable objects of taste are not made habitual, but produce satiety and disgust—The same true with respect to objects extremely agreeable—Violent passions not strengthened by repetition—Difference between natural appetites and habit—The pain of habit less under our power, than that which arises from a want of gratification, and the delight not greater—Difference between generic and specific habits—Moderate pleasures produce a generic habit—Good effects of misery—Good effects of society—Final cause of custom or painful business—Custom softens pain—As another final cause, it puts the rich and the poor on a level—Illustrated—Our native sensibility biassed by custom.

VIEWING man as under the influence of novelty, would one suspect that custom also should influence him? and yet our nature is equally susceptible of each: not only in different objects, but frequently in the same. When an object is new, it is enchanting: familiarity renders it indifferent; and custom, after a longer familiarity, makes it again disagreeable. Human nature, diversified with many and various springs of action, is wonderfully, and, indulging the expression, intricately constructed.

Custom has such influence upon many of our feelings, by warping and varying them, that we must attend to its operations if we would be acquainted with human nature. This subject, in itself obscure, has been much neglected; and a complete analysis of it would be no easy task. I pretend only to touch it cursorily; hoping, however, that what is here laid down, will dispose diligent inquirers to attempt farther discoveries.

*Custom* respects the action, *habit* the agent. By *custom* we mean a frequent reiteration of the same act; and by *habit*, the effect that custom has on the agent. This effect may be either active, witness the dexterity produced by custom in performing certain exercises; or passive, as when a thing makes an impression on us different from what it did originally. The latter only, as relative to the sensitive part of our nature, comes under the present undertaking.

This subject is intricate: some pleasures are fortified by custom; and yet custom begets familiarity, and consequently indifference: in many instances, satiety and disgust are the consequences of reiteration: again, though custom blunts the edge of distress and of pain, yet the want of any thing to which we have been long accustomed, is a sort of torture. A clue to guide us through all the intricacies of this labyrinth, would be an acceptable present.

Whatever be the cause, it is certain that we are much influenced

- \* If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work:  
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.

*First Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 2.*

by custom: it has an effect upon our pleasures, upon our actions, and even upon our thoughts and sentiments. Habit makes no figure during the vivacity of youth: in middle age it gains ground; and in old age governs without control. In that period of life, generally speaking, we eat at a certain hour, take exercise at a certain hour, go to rest at a certain hour, all by the direction of habit: nay, a particular seat, table, bed, comes to be essential: and a habit in any of these cannot be controlled without uneasiness.

Any slight or moderate pleasure frequently reiterated for a long time, forms a peculiar connection between us and the thing that causes the pleasure. This connection, termed *habit*, has the effect to awaken our desire or appetite for that thing when it returns not as usual. During the course of enjoyment, the pleasure rises insensibly higher and higher till a habit be established; at which time the pleasure is at its height. It continues not however stationary: the same customary reiteration which carried it to its height, brings it down again by insensible degrees, even lower than it was at first: but of that circumstance I shall treat afterward. What at present we have in view, is to prove by experiments, that those things which at first are but moderately agreeable, are the aptest to become habitual. Spiritous liquors, at first scarcely agreeable, readily produce an habitual appetite: and custom prevails so far, as even to make us fond of things originally disagreeable, such as coffee, assafoetida, and tobacco: which is pleasantly illustrated by Congreve:

*Fainall.* For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

*Mirabell.* And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once us'd me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces, sifted her, and separated her failings; I study'd 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily: to which end I so us'd myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance: till in a few days, it became habitual to me to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own fraikies; and in all probability, in a little time longer, I shall like 'em as well.

*The Way of the World, Act I. Sc. 3.*

A walk upon the quarter-deck, though intolerably confined, becomes, however, so agreeable by custom, that a sailor in his walk on shore, confines himself commonly within the same bounds. I knew a man who had relinquished the sea for a country life: in the corner of his garden he reared an artificial mount with a level summit, resembling most accurately a quarter-deck, not only in shape but in size; and here he generally walked. In Minorca, Governor Kane made an excellent road the whole length of the island; and yet the inhabitants adhere to the old road, though not only longer but extremely bad.\*

\* Custom is a second nature. Formerly, the merchants of Bristol had no place for meeting but the street, open to every variety of weather. An exchange was erected for them with convenient piazzas. But so rivetted were they to their accustomed place, that in order to dislodge them, the magistrates were forced to break up the pavement, and to render the place a heap of rough stones.

Play, or gaming, at first barely amusing by the occupation it affords, becomes in time extremely agreeable; and is frequently prosecuted with avidity, as if it were the chief business of life. The same observation is applicable to the pleasures of the internal senses, those of knowledge and virtue in particular: children have scarcely any sense of these pleasures; and men very little who are in the state of nature without culture: our taste for virtue and knowledge improves slowly; but is capable of growing stronger than any other appetite in human nature.

To introduce an active habit, frequency of acts is not sufficient without length of time: the quickest succession of acts in a short time, is not sufficient; nor a slow succession in the longest time. The effect must be produced by a moderate soft action, and a long series of easy touches, removed from each other by short intervals. Nor are these sufficient without regularity in the time, place, and other circumstances of the action: the more uniform any operation is, the sooner it becomes habitual. And this holds equally in a passive habit; variety in any remarkable degree, prevents the effect: thus any particular food will scarcely ever become habitual, where the manner of dressing it is varied. The circumstances then requisite to augment a moderate pleasure, and at the long run to form a habit, are weak uniform acts, reiterated during a long course of time without any considerable interruption: every agreeable cause that operates in this manner, will grow habitual.

*Affection* and *aversion*, as distinguished from passion on the one hand, and on the other from original disposition, are in reality habits respecting particular objects, acquired in the manner above set forth. The pleasure of social intercourse with any person, must originally be faint, and frequently reiterated, in order to establish the habit of affection. Affection thus generated, whether it be friendship or love, seldom swells into any tumultuous or vigorous passion; but is however the strongest cement that can bind together two individuals of the human species. In like manner, a slight degree of disgust often reiterated with regularity, grows into the habit of aversion, which commonly subsists for life.

Objects of taste that are delicious, far from tending to become habitual, are apt, by indulgence, to produce satiety and disgust: no man contracts a habit of sugar, honey, or sweetmeats, as he does of tobacco:

Dulcia non ferimus; succo renovamur amaro.

*Ovid. Art. Amand. l. 3*

We tire of sweets—we are renovated by bitter juices.

These violent delights have violent ends,  
And in their triumph die. The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in its own deliciousness,  
And in the taste confounds the appetite;  
Therefore love mod'rately, long love doth so;  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

*Romeo and Juliet, Act II. Sc. 6.*

The same observation holds with respect to all objects that being extremely agreeable raise violent passions: such passions are in-



compatible with a habit of any sort; and in particular they never produce affection nor aversion; a man who at first sight falls violently in love, has a strong desire of enjoyment, but no affection for the woman;\* a man who is surprised with an unexpected favor, burns for an opportunity to exert his gratitude, without having any affection for his benefactor: neither does desire of vengeance for an atrocious injury, involve aversion.

It is perhaps not easy to say why moderate pleasures gather strength by custom: but two causes concur to prevent that effect in the more intense pleasures. These, by an original law in our nature, increase quickly to their full growth, and decay with no less precipitation;† and custom is too slow in its operation to overcome that law. The other cause is no less powerful: exquisite pleasure is extremely fatiguing; occasioning, as a naturalist would say, great expense of animal spirits;‡ and of such the mind cannot bear so frequent gratification, as to superinduce a habit: if the thing that raises the pleasure return before the mind have recovered its tone and relish, disgust ensues instead of pleasure.

A habit never fails to admonish us of the wonted time of gratification, by raising a pain for want of the object, and a desire to have it. The pain of want is always first felt; the desire naturally follows: and upon presenting the object, both vanish instantaneously. Thus, a man accustomed to tobacco, feels, at the end of the usual interval, a confused pain of want; which at first points at nothing in particular, though it soon settles upon its accustomed object: and the same

\* Violent love without affection is finely exemplified in the following story. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks, Irene, a young Greek of an illustrious family, fell into the hands of Mahomet II., who was at that time in the prime of youth and glory. His savage heart being subdued by her charms, he shut himself up with her, denying access even to his ministers. Love obtained such ascendant, as to make him frequently abandon the army, and fly to his Irene. War relaxed, for victory was no longer the monarch's favorite passion. The soldiers, accustomed to booty, began to murmur; and the infection spread even among the commanders. The Basha Mustapha, consulting the fidelity he owed his master, was the first who durst acquaint him of the discourses held publicly to the prejudice of his glory.

The sultan, after a gloomy silence, formed his resolution. He ordered Mustapha to assemble the troops next morning; and then with precipitation retired to Irene's apartment. Never before did that princess appear so charming; never before did the prince bestow so many warm caresses. To give a new lustre to her beauty, he exhorted her women, next morning, to bestow their utmost art and care on her dress. He took her by the hand, led her into the middle of the army, and pulling off her veil, demanded of the Bashas, with a fierce look, whether they had ever beheld such a beauty? After an awful pause, Mahomet, with one hand laying hold of the young Greek by her beautiful locks, and with the other pulling out his scimitar, severed the head from the body at one stroke. Then turning to his grandees, with eyes wild and furious, "This sword," said he, "when it is my will, knows to cut the bands of love." However strange it may appear, we learn from experience, that desire of enjoyment, may consist with the most brutal aversion, directed both to the same woman. Of this we have a noted example in the first book of Sully's Memoirs; to which I choose to refer the reader; for it is too gross to be transcribed.

† See Chap. 8. Part 3.

‡ Lady Easy, upon her husband's reformation, expresses to her friend the following sentiment: "Be satisfied; Sir Charles has made me happy, even to a pain of joy."

may be observed in persons addicted to drinking, who are often in an uneasy restless state before they think of the bottle. In pleasures indulged regularly, and at equal intervals, the appetite, remarkably obsequious to custom, returns regularly with the usual time of gratification; not sooner, even though the object be presented. This pain of want arising from habit, seems directly opposite to that of satiety; and it must appear singular, that frequency of gratification should produce effects so opposite, as are the pains of excess and of want.

The appetites that respect the preservation and propagation of our species, are attended with a pain of want similar to that occasioned by habit: hunger and thirst are uneasy sensations of want, which always precede the desire of eating or drinking; and a pain for want of carnal enjoyment precedes the desire of an object. The pain being thus felt independent of an object, cannot be cured but by gratification. Very different is an ordinary passion, in which desire precedes the pain of want: such a passion cannot exist but while the object is in view; and therefore, by removing the object out of thought, it vanishes, with its desire, and pain of want.\*

The natural appetites above mentioned differ from habit in the following particular: they have an undetermined direction toward all objects of gratification in general; whereas an habitual appetite is directed to a particular object: the attachment we have by habit to a particular woman, differs widely from the natural passion which comprehends the whole sex; and the habitual relish for a particular dish is far from being the same with a vague appetite for food. That difference notwithstanding, it is still remarkable, that nature has enforced the gratification of certain natural appetites essential to the species, by a pain of the same sort with that which habit produces.

The pain of habit is less under our power than any other pain that arises from want of gratification: hunger and thirst are more easily endured, especially at first, than an unusual intermission of any habitual pleasure: persons are often heard declaring, they would forego sleep or food, rather than tobacco. We must not, however, conclude, that the gratification of an habitual appetite affords the same delight with the gratification of one that is natural: far from it; the pain of want only is greater.

The slow and reiterated acts that produce a habit, strengthen the mind to enjoy the habitual pleasure in greater quantity and more frequency than originally; and by that means a habit of intemperate gratification is often formed: after unbounded acts of intemperance, the habitual relish is soon restored, and the pain for want of enjoyment returns with fresh vigor.

The causes of the present emotions hitherto in view, are either an individual, such as a companion, a certain dwelling-place, a certain amusement; or a particular species, such as coffee, mutton, or any other food. But habit is not confined to such. A constant train of trifling diversions, may form such a habit in the mind, that it cannot

\* See Chap. 2. Part 3

be easy a moment without amusement: a variety in the objects prevents a habit as to any one in particular; but as the train is uniform with respect to amusement, the habit is formed accordingly; and that sort of habit may be denominated *a generic habit*, in opposition to the former, which is *a specific habit*. A habit of a town-life, of country sports, of solitude, of reading, or of business, where sufficiently varied, are instances of generic habits. Every specific habit has a mixture of the generic; for the habit of any one sort of food makes the taste agreeable, and we are fond of that taste wherever found. Thus a man deprived of an habitual object, takes up with what most resembles it; deprived of tobacco, any bitter herb will do, rather than want: a habit of punch, makes wine a good resource: accustomed to the sweet society and comforts of matrimony, the man, unhappily deprived of his beloved object, inclines the sooner to a second. In general, when we are deprived of a habitual object, we are fond of its qualities in any other object.

The reasons are assigned above, why the causes of intense pleasure become not readily habitual: but now we discover, that these reasons conclude only against specific habits. In the case of a weak pleasure, a habit is formed by frequency and uniformity of reiteration, which, in the case of an intense pleasure, produces satiety and disgust. But it is remarkable, that satiety and disgust have no effect, except as to that thing singly which occasions them: a surfeit of honey produces not a loathing of sugar; and intemperance with one woman produces no disrelish of the same pleasure with others. Hence it is easy to account for a generic habit in any intense pleasure: the delight we had in the gratification of the appetite inflames the imagination, and makes us, with avidity, search for the same gratification in whatever other subject it can be found. And thus uniform frequency in gratifying the same passion upon different objects, produces at length a generic habit. In this manner, one acquires an habitual delight in high and poignant sauces, rich dress, fine equipages, crowds of company, and in whatever is commonly termed *pleasure*. There concurs, at the same time, to introduce this habit, a peculiarity observed above, that reiteration of acts enlarges the capacity of the mind, to admit a more plentiful gratification than originally, with regard to frequency as well as quantity.

Hence it appears, that though a specific habit cannot be formed but upon a moderate pleasure, a generic habit may be formed upon any sort of pleasure, moderate or immoderate, that has variety of objects. The only difference is, that a weak pleasure runs naturally into a specific habit; whereas an intense pleasure is altogether averse to such a habit. In a word, it is only in singular cases that a moderate pleasure produces a generic habit; but an intense pleasure cannot produce any other habit.

The appetites that respect the preservation and propagation of the species, are formed into habit in a peculiar manner: the time as well as measure of their gratification are much under the power of custom; which, by introducing a change upon the body, occasions a proportional change in the appetites. Thus, if the body be gradu-

ally formed to a certain quantity of food at stated times, the appetite is regulated accordingly; and the appetite is again changed, when a different habit of body is introduced by a different practice. Here it would seem, that the change is not made upon the mind, which is commonly the case in passive habits, but upon the body.

When rich food is brought down by ingredients of a plainer taste, the composition is susceptible of a specific habit. Thus the sweet taste of sugar, rendered less poignant in a mixture, may, in course of time, produce a specific habit for such mixture. As moderate pleasures, by becoming more intense, tend to generic habits; so intense pleasures, by becoming more moderate, tend to specific habits.

The beauty of the human figure, by a special recommendation of nature, appears to us supreme, amid the great variety of beautiful forms bestowed upon animals. The various degrees in which individuals enjoy that property, render it an object, sometimes of a moderate, sometimes of an intense passion. The moderate passion admitting frequent reiteration without diminution, and occupying the mind without exhausting it, turns gradually stronger till it becomes a habit. Nay, instances are not wanting, of a face, at first disagreeable, afterward rendered indifferent by familiarity, and at length agreeable by custom. On the other hand, consummate beauty, at the very first glance, fills the mind so as to admit no increase. Enjoyment lessens the pleasure;\* and if often repeated, ends commonly in satiety and disgust. The impressions made by consummate beauty, in a gradual succession from lively to faint, constitute a series opposite to that of faint impressions waxing gradually more lively, till they produce a specific habit. But the mind, when accustomed to beauty, contracts a relish for it in general, though often repelled from particular objects by the pain of satiety: and thus a generic habit is formed, of which inconstancy in love is the necessary consequence; for a generic habit, comprehending every beautiful object, is an invincible obstruction to a specific habit, which is confined to one.

But a matter which is of great importance to the youth of both sexes, deserves more than a cursory view. Though the pleasant emotion of beauty differs widely from the corporeal appetite, yet when both are directed to the same object, they produce a very strong complex passion:† enjoyment in that case must be exquisite; and therefore more apt to produce satiety, than in any other case whatever. This is a never-failing effect, where consummate beauty in the one party, meets with a warm imagination and great sensibility in the other. What I am here explaining, is true without exaggeration; and they must be insensible upon whom it makes no impression: it deserves well to be pondered by the young and the amorous, who, in forming the matrimonial society, are too often blindly impelled by the animal pleasure merely, inflamed by beauty. It may indeed happen, after the pleasure is gone, and go it must with a swift pace, that a new connection is formed upon more dignified and more lasting principles: but this is a dangerous experiment: for even supposing good sense, good temper, and internal merit of every sort, yet a new

\* See Chap. 2. Part 3.

† See Chap. 2. Part 4.

connection upon such qualifications is rarely formed: it commonly, or rather always happens, that such qualifications, the only solid foundation of an indissoluble connection, are rendered altogether invisible by satiety of enjoyment creating disgust.

One effect of custom, different from any that have been explained, must not be omitted, because it makes a great figure in human nature: Though custom augments moderate pleasures, and lessens those that are intense, it has a different effect with respect to pain: for it blunts the edge of every sort of pain and distress, faint or acute. Uninterrupted misery, therefore, is attended with one good effect: if its torments be incessant, custom hardens us to bear them.

The changes made in forming habits, are curious. Moderate pleasures are augmented gradually by reiteration, till they become habitual; and then are at their height: but they are not long stationary; for from that point they gradually decay, till they vanish altogether. The pain occasioned by want of gratification, runs a different course: it increases uniformly; and at last becomes extreme, when the pleasure of gratification is reduced to nothing:

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It so falls out,  
That what we have we prize not to the worth,  
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,  
Why then we rack the value; then we find  
The virtue that possession would not show us  
Whilst it was ours.

*Much Ado about Nothing*, Act 4. Sc. 1.

The effect of custom with relation to a specific habit, is displayed through all its varieties in the use of tobacco. The taste of that plant is at first extremely unpleasant: our disgust lessens gradually till it vanishes altogether; at which period the taste is neither agreeable nor disagreeable: continuing the use of the plant, we begin to relish it; and our relish improves by use, till it arrives at perfection: from that period it gradually decays, while the habit is in a state of increment, and consequently the pain of want. The result is, that when the habit has acquired its greatest vigor, the relish is gone; and accordingly, we often smoke and take snuff habitually, without so much as being conscious of the operation. We must except gratification after the pain of want; the pleasure of which gratification is the greatest when the habit is the most vigorous; it is of the same kind with the pleasure one feels upon being delivered from the rack, the cause of which is explained above.\* This pleasure, however, is but occasionally the effect of habit; and however exquisite, is avoided as much as possible because of the pain that precedes it.

With regard to the pain of want, I can discover no difference between a generic and a specific habit. But these habits differ widely with respect to the positive pleasure: I have had occasion to observe that the pleasure of a specific habit decays gradually till it turn imperceptible; the pleasure of a generic habit, on the contrary, being supported by variety of gratification, suffers little or no decay after it comes to its height. However it may be with other generic habits, the observation, I am certain, holds with respect to the pleasures

\* Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 3.

of virtue and of knowledge: the pleasure of doing good has an unbounded scope, and may be so variously gratified, that it can never decay; science is equally unbounded; our appetite for knowledge having an ample range of gratification, where discoveries are recommended by novelty, by variety, by utility, or by all of them.

In this intricate inquiry, I have endeavored, but without success, to discover by what particular means it is that custom has influence upon us: and now nothing seems left, but to hold our nature to be so framed, as to be susceptible of such influence. And supposing it purposely so framed, it will not be difficult to find out several important final causes. That the power of custom is a happy contrivance for our good, cannot have escaped any one who reflects, that business is our province, and pleasure our relaxation only. Now satiety is necessary to check exquisite pleasures, which otherwise would engross the mind, and unqualify us for business. On the other hand, as business is sometimes painful, and is never pleasant beyond moderation, the habitual increase of moderate pleasure, and the conversion of pain into pleasure, are admirably contrived for disappointing the malice of fortune, and for reconciling us to whatever course of life may be our lot:

How use doth breed a habit in a man!  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.  
Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act v. Sc. 4.*

As the foregoing distinction between intense and moderate holds in pleasure only, every degree of pain being softened by time, custom is a catholicon for pain and distress of every sort; and of that regulation the final cause requires no illustration.

Another final cause of custom will be highly relished by every person of humanity, and yet has in a great measure been overlooked; which is, that custom has a greater influence than any other known cause, to put the rich and the poor upon a level: weak pleasures, the share of the latter, become fortunately stronger by custom: while voluptuous pleasures, the share of the former, are continually losing ground by satiety. Men of fortune, who possess palaces, sumptuous gardens, rich fields, enjoy them less than passengers do. The goods of fortune are not unequally distributed: the opulent possess what others enjoy.

And indeed, if it be the effect of habit, to produce the pain of want in a high degree, while there is little pleasure in enjoyment, a voluptuous life is of all the least to be envied. Those who are habituated to high feeding, easy vehicles, rich furniture, a crowd of valets, much deference and flattery, enjoy but a small share of happiness, while they are exposed to manifold distresses. To such a man, enslaved by ease and luxury, even the petty inconvenience in travelling, of a rough road, bad weather, or homely fare, are serious evils: he loses his tone of mind, turns peevish, and would wreak his resentment even upon the common accidents of life. Better far to



use the goods of fortune with moderation: a man who by temperance and activity has acquired a hardy constitution, is, on the one hand, guarded against external accidents; and, on the other, is provided with great variety of enjoyment ever at command.

I shall close this chapter with an article more delicate than abstruse, namely, what authority custom ought to have over our taste in the fine arts. One particular is certain, that we cheerfully abandon to the authority of custom things that nature has left indifferent. It is custom, not nature, that has established a difference between the right hand and the left, so as to make it awkward and disagreeable to use the left where the right is commonly used. The various colors, though they affect us differently, are all of them agreeable in their purity: but custom has regulated that matter in another manner; a black skin upon a human being, is to us disagreeable; and a white skin is, probably, no less so to a negro. Thus things, originally indifferent, become agreeable or disagreeable, by the force of custom. Nor will this be surprising after the discovery made above, that the original agreeableness or disagreeableness of an object, is, by the influence of custom, often converted into the opposite quality.

Proceeding to matters of taste, where there is naturally a preference of one thing before another; it is certain, in the first place, that our faint and more delicate feelings are readily susceptible of a bias from custom; and therefore that it is no proof of a defective taste to find these in some measure influenced by custom: dress and the modes of external behavior are regulated by custom in every country: the deep red or vermilion with which the ladies in France cover their cheeks, appears to them beautiful in spite of nature; and strangers cannot altogether be justified in condemning that practice, considering the lawful authority of custom, or of the *fashion*, as it is called. It is told of the people who inhabit the skirts of the Alps facing the north, that the swelling they have universally in the neck is to them agreeable. So far has custom power to change the nature of things, and to make an object originally disagreeable take on an opposite appearance.

But, as to every particular that can be denominated proper or improper, right or wrong, custom has little authority, and ought to have none. The principle of duty takes naturally place of every other; and it argues a shameful weakness or degeneracy of mind, to find it in any case so far subdued as to submit to custom.

These few hints may enable us to judge in some measure of foreign manners, whether exhibited by foreign writers or our own. A comparison between the ancients and the moderns was sometime ago a favorite subject: those who declared for ancient manners thought it sufficient that these manners were supported by custom: their antagonists, on the other hand, refusing submission to custom as a standard of taste, condemned ancient manners as in several instances irrational. In that controversy, an appeal being made to different principles, without the slightest attempt to establish a common standard, the dispute could have no end. The hints above given tend to establish a standard for judging how far the authority of custom ought to be



held lawful; and, for the sake of illustration, we shall apply that standard in a few instances.

Human sacrifices, the most dismal effect of blind and groveling superstition, wore gradually out of use by the prevalence of reason and humanity. In the days of Sophocles and Euripides, traces of that practice were still recent; and the Athenians, through the prevalence of custom, could without disgust suffer human sacrifices to be represented in their theatre, of which the *Iphigenia* of Euripides is a proof. But a human sacrifice, being altogether inconsistent with modern manners, as producing horror instead of pity, cannot with any propriety be introduced upon a modern stage. I must therefore condemn the *Iphigenia* of Racine, which, instead of the tender and sympathetic passions, substitutes disgust and horror. Another objection occurs against every fable that deviates so remarkably from improved notions and sentiments; which is, that if it should even command our belief by the authority of history, it appears too fictitious and unnatural to produce a perception of reality;\* a human sacrifice is so unnatural, and to us so improbable, that few will be affected with the representation of it more than with a fairy tale. The objection first mentioned strikes also, against the *Phedra* of that author: the Queen's passion for her stepson, transgressing the bounds of nature, creates aversion and horror rather than compassion. The author in his preface observes, that the Queen's passion, however unnatural, was the effect of destiny and the wrath of the gods; and he puts the same excuse in her own mouth. But what is the wrath of a heathen god to us Christians? we acknowledge no destiny in passion; and if love be unnatural, it never can be relished. A supposition like what our author lays hold of, may possibly cover slight improprieties; but it will never engage our sympathy for what appears to us frantic or extravagant.

Neither can I relish the catastrophe of that tragedy. A man of taste may peruse, without disgust, a Grecian performance describing a sea-monster sent by Neptune to destroy Hippolytus: he considers, that such a story might agree with the religious creed of Greece, and may be pleased with the story, as what probably had a strong effect upon a Grecian audience. But he cannot have the same indulgence for such a representation upon a modern stage: because no story that carries a violent air of fiction can ever move us in any considerable degree.

In the *Coephores* of Eschylus,† Orestes is made to say, that he was commanded by Apollo to avenge his father's murder; and yet if he obeyed, that he was to be delivered to the furies, or be struck with some horrid malady: the tragedy accordingly concludes with a chorus, deploring the fate of Orestes, obliged to take vengeance against a mother, and involved thereby in a crime against his will. It is impossible for any modern to bend his mind to opinions so irrational and absurd, which must disgust him in perusing even a Grecian story. Again, among the Greeks, grossly superstitious, it was a common opinion, that the report of a man's death was a presage

\* See Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 7.

† Act 2.

of his death: and Orestes, in the first act of *Electra*, spreading a report of his own death, in order to blind his mother and her adulterer, is even in that case affected with the presage. Such imbecility can never find grace with a modern audience: it may indeed produce some compassion for a people afflicted with absurd terrors, similar to what is felt in perusing a description of the Hottentots; but such manners will not interest our affections, nor attach us to the personages represented.

## CHAPTER XV

### EXTERNAL SIGNS OF EMOTIONS AND PASSIONS.

The soul and body intimately connected—Every class of emotions attended with appearances peculiar to themselves—Signs of external passions, voluntary and involuntary—Two kinds of voluntary, natural and arbitrary—They resemble the emotions which accompany them—The manifold expressions of the hands—The difficulty of restraining them under violent emotions—The same with respect to words—The expression of every vivid passion peculiar to itself—Every pleasant emotion has a common expression—Involuntary signs are temporary and permanent—Temporary disappear with the passion—Permanent signs formed in youth, remain fixed through life—Final cause is, to furnish us with an infallible passage to the heart—Conduct, the most perfect expression of internal disposition—The impatience to express strong emotions externally—Involuntary signs unavoidable—No remarkable external signs produced by quiescent emotions—External signs not beheld with indifference—Signs of pleasant passions agreeable; contrary, disagreeable—External signs of a pleasant passion, produce in the spectator a pleasant emotion; and external signs of a painful one, the reverse—Little variety in external signs of pleasant passion; unpleasant, the reverse—Some external signs of painful passions attractive, some repulsive—Final causes are six: it tends to fix the signification of many words—it promotes society—it transfers through a circle the feelings of an individual—Dissocial passions, being hurtful, are very noted—Subservient to morality—Affliction, exciting sympathy, is the most illustrious of all fixed causes—Sympathy prompts us to relieve objects in distress—Accounted for, by being resolved into the constitution of our nature—Signs of passion indicate that man was intended to be open and sincere.

So intimately connected are the soul and body, that every agitation in the former produces a visible effect upon the latter. There is, at the same time, a wonderful uniformity in that operation; each class of emotions and passions being invariably attended with an external appearance peculiar to itself.\* These external appearances or signs may not improperly be considered as a natural language, expressing to all beholders emotions and passions as they arise in the heart. Hope, fear, joy, grief, are displayed externally: the character of a man can be read in his face; and beauty, which makes so deep an impression, is known to result, not so much from regular features and a fine complexion, as from good nature, good sense, sprightliness, sweetness, or other mental quality, expressed upon the countenance. Though perfect skill in that language be rare, yet what is generally known is sufficient for the ordi-

\* Omnis enim motus animi, suum quendam a natura habet vultum et sonum et gestum. Cicero. l. 3. De Oratore.

For every emotion of the mind naturally has its own countenance, sound, and gesture.

nary purposes of life. But by what means we come to understand the language, is a point of some intricacy: it cannot be by sight merely; for, upon the most attentive inspection of the human face, all that can be discerned, are figure, color, and motion, which, singly or combined, never can represent a passion, nor a sentiment: the external sign is indeed visible; but to understand its meaning we must be able to connect it with the passion that causes it, an operation far beyond the reach of eyesight. Where, then, is the instructor to be found that can unveil this secret connection? If we apply to experience, it is yielded, that from long and diligent observation, we may gather, in some measure in what manner those with whom we are acquainted express their passions externally: but with respect to strangers, we are left in the dark; and yet we are not puzzled about the meaning of these external expressions in a stranger, more than in a bosom-companion. Farther, had we no other means but experience for understanding the external signs of passion, we could not expect any degree of skill in the bulk of individuals: yet matters are so much better ordered, that the external expressions of passion form a language understood by all, by the young as well as the old, by the ignorant as well as the learned: I talk of the plain and legible characters of that language: for undoubtedly we are much indebted to experience in deciphering the dark and more delicate expressions. Where then shall we apply for a solution of this intricate problem, which seems to penetrate deep into human nature? In my mind it will be convenient to suspend the inquiry, till we are better acquainted with the nature of external signs, and with their operations. These articles, therefore, shall be premised.

The external signs of passion are of two kinds, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary signs are also of two kinds: some are arbitrary, some natural. Words are obviously voluntary signs: and they are also arbitrary; excepting a few simple sounds expressive of certain internal emotions, which sounds being the same in all languages, must be the work of nature: thus the unpremeditated tones of admiration are the same in all men; as also of compassion, resentment, and despair. Dramatic writers ought to be well acquainted with this natural language of passion: the chief talent of such a writer is a ready command of the expressions that nature dictates to every person, when any vivid emotion struggles for utterance; and the chief talent of a fine reader is a ready command of tones suited to these expressions.

The other kind of voluntary signs comprehends certain attitudes or gestures that naturally accompany certain emotions with a surprising uniformity; excessive joy is expressed by leaping, dancing, or some elevation of the body: excessive grief, by sinking or depressing it: and prostration and kneeling have been employed by all nations, and in all ages, to signify profound veneration. Another circumstance, still more than uniformity, demonstrates these gestures to be natural, viz. their remarkable conformity or resemblance to the passions that produce them.\* Joy, which is a cheerful elevation of

\* See Chap. 2. Part 6.

mind, is expressed by an elevation of body: pride, magnanimity, courage, and the whole tribe of elevating passions, are expressed by external gestures that are the same as to the circumstance of elevation, however distinguishable in other respects; and hence an erect posture is a sign or expression of dignity:

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
Godlike erect, with native honor clad,  
In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all.

*Paradise Lost*, book 4.

Grief, on the other hand, as well as respect, which depresses the mind, cannot, for that reason, be expressed more significantly than by a similar depression of the body; and hence, *to be cast down*, is a common phrase, signifying to be grieved or dispirited.\*

One would not imagine who has not given peculiar attention, that the body should be susceptible of such variety of attitude and motion, as readily to accompany every different emotion with a corresponding expression. Humility, for example, is expressed naturally by hanging the head; arrogance, by its elevation; and languor or despondence, by reclining it to one side. The expressions of the hands are manifold: by different attitudes and motions, they express, desire, hope, fear; they assist us in promising, in inviting, in keeping one at a distance; they are made instruments of threatening, of supplication, of praise, and of horror; they are employed in approving, in refusing, in questioning; in showing our joy, our sorrow, our doubts, our regret, our admiration. These expressions, so obedient to passion, are extremely difficult to be imitated in a calm state: the ancients, sensible of the advantage as well as difficulty of having these expressions at command, bestowed much time and care in collecting them from observation, and in digesting them into a practical art, which was taught in their schools as an important branch of education. Certain sounds are by nature allotted to each passion for expressing it externally. The actor who has these sounds at command to captivate the ear, is mighty: if he have also proper gestures at command to captivate the eye, he is irresistible.

The foregoing signs, though in a strict sense voluntary, cannot however be restrained but with the utmost difficulty when prompted by passion. We scarcely need a stronger proof than the gestures of a keen player at bowls: observe only how he writhes his body, in order to restore a stray bowl to the right track. It is one article of good breeding, to suppress, as much as possible, these external signs of passion, that we may not in company appear too warm, or too interested. The same observation holds in speech: a passion, it is true, when in extreme, is silent;† but when less violent it must be vented in words, which have a peculiar force not to be equalled in a

\* Instead of a complimentary speech in addressing a superior, the Chinese deliver the compliment in writing, the smallness of the letters being proportioned to the degree of respect; and the highest compliment is, to make the letters so small as not to be legible. Here is a clear evidence of a mental connection between respect and littleness: a man humbles himself before his superior; and endeavors to contract himself and his hand-writing within the smallest bounds.

† See Chap. 17.

sedate composition. The ease and security we have in a confidant, may encourage us to talk of ourselves and of our feelings: but the cause is more general; for it operates when we are alone as well as in company. Passion is the cause; for in many instances it is no slight gratification, to vent a passion externally by words as well as by gestures. Some passions, when at a certain height, impel us so strongly to vent them in words, that we speak with an audible voice even when there is none to listen. It is that circumstance in passion which justifies soliloquies; and it is that circumstance which proves them to be natural.\* The mind sometimes favors this impulse of passion, by bestowing a temporary sensibility upon any object at hand, in order to make it a confidant. Thus, in the *Winter's Tale*,† Antigonus addresses himself to an infant whom he was ordered to expose;

Come, poor babe,  
I have heard, but not believ'd, the spirits of the dead  
May walk again; if such things be, thy mother  
Appear'd to me last night; for ne'er was dream  
So like a waking.

The involuntary signs, which are all of them natural, are either peculiar to one passion, or common to many. Every vivid passion hath an external expression peculiar to itself; not excepting pleasant passions; witness admiration and mirth. The pleasant emotions that are less vivid have one common expression; from which we may gather the strength of the emotion, but scarce the kind: we perceive a cheerful or contented look; and we can make no more of it. Painful passions, being all of them violent, are distinguishable from each other by their external expressions: thus fear, shame, anger, anxiety, dejection, despair, have each of them peculiar expressions; which are apprehended without the least confusion: some painful passions produce violent effects upon the body, trembling, for example, starting, and swooning; but these effects, depending in a good measure upon singularity of constitution, are not uniform in all men.

The involuntary signs, such of them as are displayed upon the countenance, are of two kinds: some are temporary, making their appearance with the emotions that produce them, and vanishing with these emotions; others, being formed gradually by some violent passion often recurring, become permanent signs of that passion, and

\* Though a soliloquy in the perturbation of passion is undoubtedly natural, and indeed not unfrequent in real life; yet Congreve, who himself has penned several good soliloquies, yields, with more candor than knowledge, that they are unnatural; and he only pretends to justify them from necessity. This he does in his dedication of the *Double Dealer*, in the following words: "When a man in a soliloquy reasons with himself, and *pro's* and *con's*, and weighs all his designs; we ought not to imagine, that this man either talks to us, or to himself: he is only thinking, and thinking (frequently) such matter as it were inexcusable folly in him to speak. But because we are concealed spectators of the plot in agitation, and the poet finds it necessary to let us know the whole mystery of his contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this person's thoughts; and to that end is forced to make use of the expedient of speech, no other better way being yet invented for the communication of thought."

† Act 3. sc. 3.

serve to denote the disposition or temper. The face of an infant indicates no particular disposition, because it cannot be marked with any character, to which time is necessary. Even the temporary signs are extremely awkward, being the first rude essays of Nature to discover internal feelings: thus the shrieking of a new born infant, without tears or sobbings, is plainly an attempt to weep; and some of these temporary signs, as smiling and frowning, cannot be observed for some months after birth. Permanent signs, formed in youth while the body is soft and flexible, are preserved entire by the firmness and solidity that the body acquires, and are never obliterated even by a change of temper. Such signs are not produced after the fibres become rigid; some violent cases excepted, such as reiterated fits of the gout or stone through a course of time: but these signs are not so obstinate as those which are produced in youth; for when the cause is removed, they gradually wear away, and at last vanish.

The natural signs of emotions, voluntary and involuntary, being nearly the same in all men, form a universal language, which no distance of place, no difference of tribe, no diversity of tongue, can darken or render doubtful: even education, though of mighty influence, has not power to vary nor sophisticate, far less to destroy, their signification. This is a wise appointment of Providence; for if these signs were, like words, arbitrary and variable, the thoughts and volitions of strangers would be entirely hid from us; which would prove a great, or rather invincible, obstruction to the formation of societies: but as matters are ordered, the external appearances of joy, grief, anger, fear, shame, and of the other passions, forming a universal language, open a direct avenue to the heart. As the arbitrary signs vary in every country, there could be no communication of thoughts among different nations, were it not for the natural signs, in which all agree: and as the discovering of passions instantly at their birth, is essential to our well-being, and often necessary for self-preservation, the Author of our nature, attentive to our wants has provided a passage to the heart, which never can be obstructed while eyesight remains.

In an inquiry concerning the external signs of passion, actions must not be overlooked; for though singly they afford no clear light, they are, upon the whole, the best interpreters of the heart.\* By observing a man's conduct for a course of time, we discover unerringly the various passions that move him to action, what he loves, and what he hates. In our younger years, every single action is a mark, not at all ambiguous, of the temper; for in childhood

\* The actions here chiefly in view, are what a passion suggests in order to its gratification. Beside these, actions are occasionally exerted to give some vent to passion, without any view to an ultimate gratification. Such occasional action is characteristic of the passion in a high degree; and for that reason, when happily invented, has a wonderfully good effect:

*Hamlet.* Oh most pernicious woman!  
Oh villain, villain, smiling damned villain!  
My tables—meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [*Writing.*]  
So, uncle, there you are. *Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 5.*



there is little or no disguise: the subject becomes more intricate in advanced age; but even there, dissimulation is seldom carried on for any length of time. And thus the conduct of life is the most perfect expression of the internal disposition. It merits not indeed the title of a universal language; because it is not thoroughly understood except by those of penetrating genius or extensive observation: it is a language, however, which every one can decipher in some measure; and which, joined with the other external signs, affords sufficient means for the direction of our conduct with regard to others: if we commit any mistake when such light is afforded, it can never be the effect of unavoidable ignorance, but of rashness or inadvertence.

Reflecting on the various expressions of our emotions, we recognise the anxious care of Nature to discover men to each other. Strong emotions, as above hinted, beget an impatience to express them externally by speech and other voluntary signs, which cannot be suppressed without a painful effort: thus a sudden fit of passion, is a common excuse for indecent behavior or opprobrious language. As to involuntary signs, these are altogether unavoidable: no volition nor effort can prevent the shaking of the limbs, nor a pale visage, in a fit of terror: the blood will fly to the face upon a sudden emotion of shame, in spite of all opposition.

Emotions indeed, properly so called, which are quiescent, produce no remarkable signs externally. Nor is it necessary that the more deliberate passions should, because the operation of such passions is neither sudden nor violent. These, however, remain not altogether in obscurity; for being more frequent than violent passion, the bulk of our actions are directed by them. Actions therefore display, with sufficient evidence, the more deliberate passions; and complete the admirable system of external signs, by which we become skilful in human nature.

What comes next in order is, to examine the effects produced upon a spectator by external signs of passion. None of these signs are beheld with indifference: they are productive of various emotions, tending all of them to ends wise and good. This curious subject makes a capital branch of human nature: it is peculiarly useful to writers who deal in the pathetic; and to history painters it is indispensable.

It is mentioned above, that each passion, or class of passions, has its peculiar signs; and, with respect to the present subject, it must be added, that these invariably make certain impressions on a spectator: the external signs of joy, for example, produce a cheerful emotion; the external signs of grief produce pity; and the external signs of rage produce a sort of terror even in those who are not aimed at.

Secondly, it is natural to think, that pleasant passions should express themselves externally by signs that to a spectator appear agreeable, and painful passions by signs that to him appear disagreeable. This conjecture, which Nature suggests, is confirmed by experience. Pride possibly may be thought an exception, the



external signs of which are disagreeable, though it is commonly reckoned a pleasant passion: but pride is not an exception, being in reality a mixed passion, partly pleasant, and partly painful; for when a proud man confines his thoughts to himself, and to his own dignity or importance, the passion is pleasant, and its external signs agreeable; but as pride chiefly consists in undervaluing or contemning others, it is so far painful, and its external signs disagreeable.

Thirdly, it is laid down above, that an agreeable object produces always a pleasant emotion, and a disagreeable object one that is painful.\* According to this law, the external signs of a pleasant passion, being agreeable, must produce in the spectator a pleasant emotion: and the external signs of a painful passion, being disagreeable, must produce in him a painful emotion.

Fourthly, in the present chapter it is observed, that pleasant passions are, for the most part, expressed externally in one uniform manner; but that all the painful passions are distinguishable from each other by their external expressions. The emotions accordingly raised in a spectator by external signs of pleasant passions, have little variety: these emotions are pleasant or cheerful, and we have not words to reach a more particular description. But the external signs of painful passions produce in the spectator emotions of different kinds: the emotions, for example, raised by external signs of grief, of remorse, of anger, of envy, of malice, are clearly distinguishable from each other.

Fifthly, external signs of painful passions are some of them *attractive*, and some *repulsive*. Of every painful passion that is also disagreeable,† the external signs are repulsive, repelling the spectator from the object: and the passion raised by such external signs may be also considered as repulsive. Painful passions that are agreeable produce an opposite effect. Their external signs are attractive, drawing the spectator to them, and producing in him benevolence to the person upon whom these signs appear: witness distress painted on the countenance, which instantaneously inspires the spectator with pity, and impels him to afford relief. And the passion raised by such external signs may also be considered as attractive. The cause of this difference among the painful passions raised by their external signs may be readily gathered from what is laid down, chap. 2. part 7.

It is now time to look back to the question proposed in the beginning, How we come to understand external signs, so as to refer each sign to its proper passion! We have seen that this branch of knowledge cannot be derived originally from sight, nor from experience. Is it then implanted in us by nature? The following considerations will incline us to answer the question in the affirmative. In the first place, the external signs of passion must be natural; for they are invariably the same in every country, and among the different tribes of men: pride, for example, is always expressed by an erect posture, reverence by prostration, and sorrow by a dejected look. Secondly

\* See Chap. 2. Part 7.

† See passions explained as agreeable or disagreeable, Chap. 2. Part 2.

we are not even indebted to experience for the knowledge that these expressions are natural and universal; for we are so framed as to have an innate conviction of the fact. Let a man change his habitation to the other side of the globe, he will, from the accustomed signs, infer the passion of fear among his new neighbors, with as little hesitation as he did at home. But why, after all, involve ourselves in preliminary observations, when the doubt may be directly solved as follows! That, if the meaning of external signs be not derived to us from sight, nor from experience, there is no remaining source whence it can be derived but from nature.

We may then venture to pronounce, with some degree of assurance, that man is provided by nature with a sense or faculty that lays open to him every passion by means of its external expressions. And we cannot entertain any reasonable doubt of this, when we reflect, that the meaning of external signs is not hid even from infants. An infant is remarkably affected with the passions of its nurse expressed in her countenance: a smile cheers it, a frown makes it afraid: but fear cannot exist without apprehending danger; and what danger can the infant apprehend, unless it be sensible that its nurse is angry? We must therefore admit, that a child can read anger in its nurse's face; of which it must be sensible intuitively, for it has no other means of knowledge. I do not affirm, that these particulars are clearly apprehended by the child; for to produce clear and distinct perceptions, reflection and experience are requisite: but that even an infant, when afraid, must have some notion of its being in danger, is evident.

That we should be conscious intuitively of a passion from its external expressions, is conformable to the analogy of nature: the knowledge of that language is of too great importance to be left upon experience; because a foundation so uncertain and precarious, would prove a great obstacle to the formation of societies. Wisely, therefore, is it ordered, and agreeably to the system of Providence, that we should have nature for our instructor.

Manifold and admirable are the purposes to which the external signs of passion are made subservient by the Author of our nature: those occasionally mentioned above, make but a part. Several final causes remain to be unfolded; and to that task I proceed with alacrity. In the first place, the signs of internal agitation displayed externally to every spectator, tend to fix the signification of many words. The only effectual means to ascertain the meaning of any doubtful word, is an appeal to the thing it represents: and hence the ambiguity of words expressive of things that are not objects of external sense; for in that case an appeal is denied. Passion, strictly speaking, is not an object of external sense; but its external signs are: and by means of these signs, passions may be appealed to with tolerable accuracy. Thus the words that denote our passions, next to those that denote external objects, have the most distinct meaning. Words signifying internal action and the more delicate feelings, are less distinct. This defect with regard to internal action, is what chiefly occasions the intricacy of logic: the terms of that science are

far from being sufficiently ascertained, even after much care and labor bestowed by an eminent writer;\* to whom, however, the world is greatly indebted, for removing a mountain of rubbish, and moulding the subject into a rational and correct form. The same defect is remarkable in criticism, which has for its object the more delicate feelings; the terms that denote these feelings being not more distinct than those of logic. To reduce the science of criticism to any regular form, has never once been attempted: however rich the ore may be, no critical chemist has been found, to analyze its constituent parts, and to distinguish each by its own name.

In the second place, society among individuals is greatly promoted by that universal language. Looks and gestures give direct access to the heart, and lead us to select, with tolerable accuracy, the persons who are worthy of our confidence. It is surprising how quickly, and for the most part how correctly, we judge of character from external appearance.

Thirdly, after social intercourse is commenced, these external signs, which diffuse, through a whole assembly, the feelings of each individual, contribute above all other means to improve the social affections. Language, no doubt, is the most comprehensive vehicle for communicating emotions: but in expedition, as well as in power of conviction, it falls short of the signs under consideration; the involuntary signs especially, which are incapable of deceit. Where the countenance, the tones, the gestures, the actions, join with the words in communicating emotions, these united have a force irresistible. Thus all the pleasant emotions of the human heart, with all the social and virtuous affections, are, by means of these external signs, not only perceived, but felt. By this admirable contrivance, conversation becomes that lively and animating amusement, without which life would at best be insipid: one joyful countenance spreads cheerfulness instantaneously through a multitude of spectators.

Fourthly, dissocial passions, being hurtful by prompting violence and mischief, are noted by the most conspicuous external signs, in order to put us upon our guard. Thus anger and revenge, especially when sudden, display themselves on the countenance in legible characters.† The external signs again of every passion that threatens danger raise in us the passion of fear: which frequently operating

\* Locke.

† Rough and blunt manners are allied to anger by an internal feeling, as well as by external expressions resembling in a faint degree those of anger: therefore such manners are easily heightened into anger; and savages for that reason are prone to anger. Thus rough and blunt manners are unhappy in two respects. First, they are readily converted into anger; and next, the change being imperceptible because of the similitude of their external signs, the person against whom the anger is directed is not put upon his guard. It is for these reasons a great object in society, to correct such manners, and to bring on a habit of sweetness and calmness. This temper has two opposite good effects. First, it is not easily provoked to wrath. Next, the interval being great between it and real anger, a person of this temper who receives an affront, has many changes to go through before his anger be inflamed: these changes have each of them their external sign; and the offending party is put upon his guard, to retire, or to endeavor a reconciliation.

without reason or reflection, moves us by a sudden impulse to avoid the impending danger.\*

In the fifth place, these external signs are remarkably subservient to morality. A painful passion, being accompanied with disagreeable external signs, must produce in every spectator a painful emotion: but then, if the passion be social, the emotion it produces is attractive, and connects the spectator with the person who suffers. Dissocial passions only are productive of repulsive emotions, involving the spectator's aversion, and frequently his indignation. This beautiful contrivance makes us cling to the virtuous, and abhor the wicked.

Sixthly, of all the external signs of passion, those of affliction or distress are the most illustrious with respect to a final cause. They are illustrious by the singularity of their contrivance, and also by inspiring sympathy, a passion to which human society is indebted for its greatest blessing, that of providing relief for the distressed. A subject so interesting deserves a leisurely and attentive examination. The conformity of the nature of man to his external circumstances is in every particular wonderful: his nature makes him prone to society; and society is necessary to his well-being, because in a solitary state he is a helpless being, destitute of support, and in his manifold distresses destitute of relief. But mutual support, the shining attribute of society, is of too great moment to be left dependent upon cool reason: it is ordered more wisely, and with greater conformity to the analogy of nature, that it should be enforced even instinctively by the passion of sympathy. Here sympathy makes a capital figure, and contributes, more than any other means, to make life easy and comfortable. But, however essential the sympathy of others may be to our well-being, one beforehand would not readily conceive how it could be raised by external signs of distress: for considering the analogy of nature, if these signs be agreeable, they must give birth to a pleasant emotion leading every beholder to be pleased with human woes: if disagreeable, as they undoubtedly are, ought they not naturally to repel the spectator from them, in order to be relieved from pain? Such would be the reasoning beforehand; and such would be the effect were man purely a selfish being. But the benevolence of our nature gives a very different direction to the painful passion of sympathy, and to the desire involved in it: instead of avoiding distress, we fly to it in order to afford relief: and our sympathy cannot be otherwise gratified but by giving all the succor in our power.† Thus external signs of distress, though disagreeable, are attractive; and the sympathy they inspire is a powerful cause, impelling us to afford relief even to a stranger as if he were our friend or relation.‡

\* See Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 6.

† See Chap. 2. Part 7.

‡ It is a noted observation, that the deepest tragedies are the most crowded; which in a slight view will be thought an unaccountable bias in human nature. Love of novelty, desire of occupation, beauty of action, make us fond of theatrical representations; and, when once engaged, we must follow the story to the conclusion, whatever distress it may create. But we generally become wise by experience; and when we foresee what pain we shall suffer during the course of the

The effects produced in all beholders by external signs of passion, tend so visibly to advance the social state, that I must indulge my heart with a more narrow inspection of this admirable branch of the human constitution. These external signs, being all of them resolvable into color, figure, and motion, should not naturally make any deep impression on a spectator: and supposing them qualified for making deep impressions, we have seen above, that the effects they produce are not such as might be expected. We cannot, therefore, account otherwise for the operation of these external signs, but by ascribing it to the original constitution of human nature: to improve the social state, by making us instinctively rejoice with the glad of heart, weep with the mourner, and shun those who threaten danger, is a contrivance no less illustrious for its wisdom than for its benevolence. With respect to the external signs of distress in particular, to judge of the excellency of their contrivance, we need only reflect upon several other means seemingly more natural, that would not have answered the end proposed. What if the external signs of joy were disagreeable, and the external signs of distress agreeable? This is no whimsical supposition, because there appears not any necessary connection between these signs and the emotions produced by them in a spectator. Admitting then the supposition, the question is, how would our sympathy operate? There is no occasion to deliberate for an answer: sympathy would be destructive, and not beneficial: for, supposing the external signs of joy disagreeable, the happiness of others would be our aversion; and supposing the external signs of grief agreeable, the distresses of others would be our entertainment. I make a second supposition, that the external signs of distress were indifferent to us, and productive neither of pleasure nor of pain. This would annihilate the strongest branch of sympathy, that which is raised by means of sight: and it is evident that reflective sympathy, felt by those only who have great sensibility, would not have any extensive effect. I shall draw nearer to truth in a third supposition, that the external signs of distress being disagreeable, were productive of a painful repulsive emotion. Sympathy upon that supposition would not be annihilated: but it would be rendered useless; for it would be gratified by flying from or avoiding the object, instead of clinging to it and affording relief: the condition of man would in reality be worse than if sympathy were totally eradicated; because sympathy would only serve to plague those who feel it, without producing any good to the afflicted.

Loth to quit so interesting a subject, I add a reflection, with which I shall conclude. The external signs of passion are a strong indication, that man, by his very constitution, is framed to be open and

representation, is it not surprising that persons of reflection do not avoid such spectacles altogether? And yet one who has scarcely recovered from the distress of a deep tragedy, resolves coolly and deliberately to go to the very next, without the slightest obstruction from self-love. The whole mystery is explained by a single observation—that sympathy, though painful, is attractive, and attaches us to an object in distress, the opposition of self-love notwithstanding, which should prompt us to fly from it. And by this curious mechanism it is, that persons of any degree of sensibility are attracted by affliction still more than by joy.

sincere. A child, in all things obedient to the impulses of nature, hides none of its emotions: the savage and clown, who have no guide but pure nature, expose their hearts to view, by giving way to all the natural signs. And even when men learn to dissemble their sentiments, and when behavior degenerates into art, there still remain checks, that keep dissimulation within bounds, and prevent a great part of its mischievous effects. The total suppression of the voluntary signs during any vivid passion, begets the utmost uneasiness, which cannot be endured for any considerable time: this operation becomes, indeed, less painful by habit; but, luckily, the involuntary signs cannot, by any effort, be suppressed, nor even dissembled. An absolute hypocrisy, by which the character is concealed, and a fictitious one assumed, is made impracticable; and nature has hereby prevented much harm to society. We may pronounce, therefore, that Nature, herself sincere and candid, intends that mankind should preserve the same character, by cultivating simplicity and truth, and banishing every sort of dissimulation that tends to mischief.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SENTIMENTS.

Sentiment is a thought prompted by passion—In dramatic composition adjust the passion to the character, the sentiment to the passion, the language to the sentiment—Dialogue, the most difficult kind of composition—The difference between the French and the English, owing to this: French formed on Corneille's declamation, English, on Shakspeare's language of nature—Passion does not long continue in the same tone: the sentiment should rise and fall with the passion, and the language correspond with both—When the mind vibrates between two passions, the sentiments should also vibrate—Passion to be subject to reason—Immoderate passions, when represented, to be distinguished as much as possible—Six faulty sentiments—Sentiments that accord not with the passion—those that may belong to an ordinary passion, but unsuitable to it—thoughts in description—sentiments introduced too early or too late—vicious sentiments exposed in their natural garb—Unnatural sentiments are of three kinds—when they are unsuited to the nature of man—when inconsistent—when too artificial for a serious passion.

EVERY thought prompted by passion, is termed *a sentiment*.\* To have a general notion of the different passions, will not alone enable an artist to make a just representation of any passion: he ought, over and above, to know the various appearances of the same passion in different persons. Passions receive a tincture from every peculiarity of character; and for that reason it rarely happens, that a passion, in the different circumstances of feeling, of sentiment, and of expression, is precisely the same in any two persons. Hence the following rule concerning dramatic and epic compositions. That a passion be adjusted to the character, the sentiments to the passion, and the language to the sentiments. If nature be not faithfully copied in each of these, a defect in execution is perceived: there may appear some resemblance; but the picture, upon the

\* See Appendix, § 32.



whole, will be insipid; through want of grace and delicacy. A painter, in order to represent the various attitudes of the body, ought to be intimately acquainted with muscular motion: no less intimately acquainted with emotions and characters ought a writer to be, in order to represent the various attitudes of the mind. A general notion of the passions, in their grosser differences of strong and weak, elevated and humble, severe and gay, is far from being sufficient: pictures formed so superficially have little resemblance, and no expression; yet it will hereafter appear, that in many instances our artists are deficient, even in that superficial knowledge.

In handling the present subject, it would be endless to trace even the ordinary passions through their nice and minute differences. Mine shall be an humbler task; which is, to select from the best writers instances of faulty sentiments, after paving the way by some general observations.

To talk in the language of music, each passion has a certain tone, to which every sentiment proceeding from it ought to be tuned with the greatest accuracy: which is no easy work, especially where such harmony ought to be supported during the course of a long theatrical representation. In order to reach such delicacy of execution, it is necessary that a writer assume the precise character and passion of the personage represented; which requires an uncommon genius. But it is the only difficulty; for the writer, who, annihilating himself, can thus become another person, need be in no pain about the sentiments that belong to the assumed character: these will flow without the least study, or even preconception; and will frequently be as delightfully new to himself as to his reader. But if a lively picture even of a single emotion requires an effort of genius, how much greater the effort to compose a passionate dialogue with as many different tones of passion as there are speakers? With what ductility of feeling must that writer be endowed, who approaches perfection in such a work; when it is necessary to assume different and even opposite characters and passions, in the quickest succession? Yet this work, difficult as it is, yields to that of composing a dialogue in genteel comedy, exhibiting characters without passion. The reason is, that the different tones of character are more delicate and less in sight, than those of passion; and, accordingly, many writers, who have no genius for drawing characters, make a shift to represent, tolerably well, an ordinary passion in its simple movements. But of all works of this kind, what is truly the most difficult, is a characteristical dialogue upon any philosophical subject. To interweave characters with reasoning, by suiting to the character of each speaker, a peculiarity not only of thought, but of expression, requires the perfection of genius, taste, and judgment.

How nice dialogue-writing is, will be evident, even without reasoning, from the miserable compositions of that kind found without number in all languages. The art of mimicking any singularity in gesture or in voice, is a rare talent, though directed by sight and hearing—the acutest and most lively of our external senses: how much more rare must the talent be, of imitating characters and internal



emotions, tracing all their different tints, and representing them in a lively manner by natural sentiments properly expressed? The truth is, such execution is too delicate for an ordinary genius; and for that reason, the bulk of writers, instead of expressing a passion as one does who feels it, content themselves with describing it in the language of a spectator. To awaken passion by an internal effort merely, without any external cause, requires great sensibility: and yet that operation is necessary, no less to the writer than to the actor; because none but those who actually feel a passion, can represent it to the life. The writer's part is the more complicated: he must add composition to passion; and must, in the quickest succession, adopt every different character. But a very humble flight of imagination, may serve to convert a writer into a spectator; so as to figure, in some obscure manner, an action as passing in his sight and hearing. In that figured situation, being led naturally to write like a spectator, he entertains his readers with his own reflections, with cool description, and florid declamation; instead of making them eye-witnesses, as it were, to a real event, and to every movement of genuine passion.\* Thus most of our plays appear to be cast in the same mould; personages without character, the mere outlines of passion, a tiresome monotony, and a pompous declamatory style.†

This descriptive manner of representing passion, is a very cold entertainment: our sympathy is not raised by description; we must first be lulled into a dream of reality, and every thing must appear as passing in our sight.‡ Unhappy is the player of genius who acts a capital part in what may be termed a *descriptive tragedy*; after assuming the very passion that is to be represented, how is he cramped in action, when he must utter, not the sentiments of the passion he feels, but a cold description in the language of a bystander? It is that imperfection, I am persuaded, in the bulk of our plays, which confines our stage almost entirely to Shakspeare, notwithstanding his many irregularities. In our late English tragedies, we sometimes find sentiments tolerably well adapted to a plain passion: but we must not, in any of them, expect a sentiment expressive of character; and, upon that very account, our late performances of the dramatic kind are, for the most part, intolerably insipid.

\* In the *Æneid*, the hero is made to describe himself in the following words: *Sum pius Æneas, fama super aethera notus*. Virgil could never have been guilty of an impropriety so gross, had he assumed the personage of his hero, instead of uttering the sentiments of a spectator. Nor would Xenophon have made the following speech for Cyrus the younger, to his Grecian auxiliaries, whom he was leading against his brother Artaxerxes: "I have chosen you, O Greeks! my auxiliaries, not to enlarge my army, for I have *Barbarians* without number; but because you surpass all the *Barbarians* in valor and military discipline." This sentiment is Xenophon's: for surely Cyrus did not reckon his countrymen *Barbarians*.

† "Chez Racine tout est sentiment; il a su faire parler *chacun pour soi*, et c'est en cela qu'il est vraiment unique parmi les auteurs dramatiques de sa nation."  
—Rousseau.

‡ See Chap. 2. Part 1. sect. 7.

Looking back upon what is said, I am in some apprehension of not being perfectly understood; for it is not easy to avoid obscurity in handling a matter so complicated: but I promise to set it in the clearest light, by adding example to precept. The first examples shall be of sentiments that appear the legitimate offspring of passion; to which shall be opposed what are descriptive only, and illegitimate: and in making this comparison, I borrow my instances from Shakspeare and Corneille, who for genius in dramatic composition stand uppermost in the rolls of fame.

Shakspeare shall furnish the first example, being of sentiments dictated by a violent and perturbed passion:

*Lear.* ————— Filial ingratitude  
Is it not, as if this mouth should tear this hand  
For lifting food to't?—But I'll punish home;  
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night,  
To shut me out!—Pour on, I will endure.  
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril,  
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all—  
O! that way madness lies; let me shun that;  
No more of that. —————

*Kent.* Good, my lord, enter here.

*Lear.* Pr'ythee, go in thyself, seek thine own ease,  
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder  
On things would hurt me more:—but I'll go in;  
In, boy, go first: You houseless poverty—  
Nay, get thee in; I'll pray, and then I'll sleep—  
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!  
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness defend you  
From seasons such as these?—O I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! take physic, Pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

*King Lear, Act III. Sc. 4.*

I give another example of the same kind, expressing sentiments arising from remorse and despair:

*Othello.* Lo! I have a weapon:  
A better never did itself sustain  
Upon a soldier's thigh. I've seen the day,  
That with this little arm, and this good sword,  
I've made my way through more impediments  
Than twenty times your stop. But, oh vain boast!  
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.  
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;  
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,  
The very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear.  
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,  
And he retires. Where should Othello go?  
Now—how dost thou look now? Oh ill-starr'd wench!  
Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt,  
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heav'n,  
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl;  
Ev'n like thy chastity. O cursed slave!  
Whip me, ye devils,  
From the possession of this heav'nly sight;

Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur,  
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire——  
 Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! dead! oh! oh!

*Othello, Act V. Sc. 2.*

The sentiments here displayed flow so naturally from the passions represented, that we cannot conceive any imitation more perfect.

With regard to the French author, truth obliges me to acknowledge, that he describes in the style of a spectator, instead of expressing passion like one who feels it; which naturally betrays him into a tiresome monotony, and a pompous declamatory style.\* It is scarcely necessary to give examples, for he never varies from that tone. I shall, however, take two passages at a venture, in order to be confronted with those transcribed above. In the tragedy of *Cinna*, *Æmilia*, after the conspiracy was discovered, having nothing in view but racks and death to herself and her lover, receives a pardon from *Augustus*, attended with the brightest circumstances of magnanimity and tenderness. This is a lucky situation for representing the passions of surprise and gratitude in their different stages, which seem naturally to be what follow. These passions, raised at once to the utmost pitch, and being at first too big for utterance, must, for some moments be expressed by violent gestures only: as soon as there is

\* This criticism reaches the French dramatic writers in general, with very few exceptions: their tragedies, excepting those of *Racine*, are mostly, if not totally, descriptive. *Corneille* led the way; and later writers, imitating his manner, have accustomed the French ear to a style, formal, pompous, declamatory, which suits not with any passion. Hence, to burlesque a French tragedy, is not more difficult than to burlesque a stiff solemn fop. The facility of the operation has in Paris introduced a singular amusement, which is, to burlesque the more successful tragedies in a sort of farce, called a *parody*. *La Motte*, who himself appears to have been sorely galled by some of these productions, acknowledges that no more is necessary to give them currency but barely to vary the *dramatis personæ*, and instead of kings and heroes, queens and princesses, to substitute tinkers and tailors, milkmaids and seamstresses. The declamatory style, so different from the genuine expression of passion, passes in some measure unobserved, when great personages are the speakers; but in the mouths of the vulgar the impropriety with regard to the speaker as well as to the passion represented, is so remarkable as to become ridiculous. A tragedy, where every passion is made to speak in its natural tone, is not liable to be thus burlesqued: the same passion is by all men expressed nearly in the same manner; and, therefore, the genuine expressions of a passion cannot be ridiculous in the mouth of any man who is susceptible of the passion.

It is a well known fact, that to an English ear, the French actors appear to pronounce with too great rapidity; a complaint much insisted on by *Cibber* in particular, who had frequently heard the famous *Baron* upon the French stage. This may in some measure be attributed to our want of facility in the French tongue; as foreigners generally imagine that every language is pronounced too quick by natives. But that it is not the sole cause, will be probable from a fact directly opposite, that the French are not a little disgusted with the languidness, as they term it, of the English pronunciation. May not this difference of taste be derived from what is observed above? The pronunciation of the genuine language of a passion is necessarily directed by the nature of the passion, particularly by the slowness or celerity of its progress: plaintive passions, which are the most frequent in tragedy, having a slow motion, dictate a slow pronunciation; in declamation, on the contrary, the speaker warms gradually; and, as he warms, he naturally accelerates his pronunciation. But, as the French have formed their tone of pronunciation upon *Corneille's* declamatory tragedies, and the English upon the more natural language of *Shakspeare*, it is not surprising that custom should produce such difference of taste in the two nations

vent for words, the first expressions are broken and interrupted: at last we ought to expect a tide of intermingled sentiments, occasioned by the fluctuation of the mind between the two passions. *Æmilia* is made to behave in a very different manner: with extreme coolness she describes her own situation, as if she were merely a spectator, or rather the poet takes the task off her hands:

Et je me rends, Seigneur, à ces hautes bontés :  
Je recouvre la vue auprès de leurs clartés.  
Je connois mon forfait qui me sembloit justice ;  
Et ce que n'avoit pû la terreur du supplice,  
Je sens naître en mon ame un repentir puissant,  
Et mon cœur en secret me dit, qu'il y consent.  
Le ciel a résolu votre grandeur suprême ;  
Et pour preuve, Seigneur, je n'en veux que moi-même.  
J'ose avec vanité me donner cet éelat,  
Puisqu'il change mon cœur, qu'il veut changer l'état,  
Ma haine va mourir, que j'ai crue immortelle ;  
Elle est morte, et ce cœur devient sujet fidèle ;  
Et prenant désormais cette haine en horreur,  
L'ardeur de vous servir succède à sa fureur.

Act V. Sc. 3.

In the tragedy of *Sertorius*, the queen, surprised with the news that her lover was assassinated, instead of venting any passion, degenerates into a cool spectator, and undertakes to instruct the bystanders how a queen ought to behave on such an occasion:

*Viriate.* Il m'en fait voir ensemble, et l'auteur, et la cause.  
Par cet assassinat c'est de moi qu'on dispose,  
C'est mon trône, c'est moi qu'on pretend conquérir ;  
Et c'est mon juste choix qui seul l'a fait périr.  
Madame après sa perte, et parmi ces alarmes,  
N'attendez point de moi de soupirs, ni de larmes ;  
Ce sont amusemens que dédaigne aisément  
Le prompt et noble orgueil d'un vif ressentiment.  
Qui pleure, l'affoiblit ; qui soupire, l'exhale :  
Il faut plus de fierté dans une ame royale ;  
Et ma douleur soumise aux soins de le venger, &c.

Act V. Sc. 3.

So much in general upon the genuine sentiments of passion. I proceed to particular observations. And, first, passions seldom continue uniform any considerable time: they generally fluctuate, swelling and subsiding by turns, often in a quick succession;\* and the sentiments cannot be just unless they correspond to such fluctuation. Accordingly, climax never shows better than in expressing a swelling passion: the following passages may suffice for an illustration.

*Oroonoko.*———Can you raise the dead ?  
Pursue and overtake the wings of time ?  
And bring about again, the hours, the days,  
The years, that made me happy ?

*Oroonoko*, Act II. Sc. 3.

*Almeria.*———How hast thou charm'd  
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this ?  
That thus relenting they have giv'n thee back  
To earth, to light and life, to love and me ?

*Mourning Bride*, Act I. Sc. 7.

\* See Chap. 2. Part 2.

I would not be the villain that thou think'st  
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp  
And the rich East to boot.

*Macbeth*, Act IV. Sc. 3.

The following passage expresses finely the progress of conviction.

Let me not stir, nor breathe, lest I dissolve  
That tender, lovely form, of painted air,  
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls;  
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade.  
'Tis life! 'tis warm! 'tis she! 'tis she herself!  
It is Almeria, 'tis, it is my wife!

*Mourning Bride*, Act II. Sc. 6.

In the progress of thought, our resolutions become more vigorous as well as our passions:

If ever I do yield or give consent,  
By any action, word, or thought, to wed  
Another lord; may then just heav'n show'r down, &c.

*Mourning Bride*, Act I. Sc. 1.

And this leads to a second observation, that the different stages of a passion, and its different directions, from birth to extinction, must be carefully represented in their order; because otherwise the sentiments, by being misplaced, will appear forced and unnatural. Resentment, for example, when provoked by an atrocious injury, discharges itself first upon the author: sentiments therefore of revenge come always first, and must, in some measure, be exhausted before the person injured thinks of grieving for himself. In the *Cid* of Corneille, Don Diegue having been affronted in a cruel manner, expresses scarcely any sentiment of revenge, but is totally occupied in contemplating the low situation to which he is reduced by the affront:

O rage! ô désespoir! ô vieillesse ennemie!  
N'ai-je donc tant vécu que pour cette infamie?  
Et ne suis-je blanchi dans les travaux guerriers,  
Que pour voir en un jour flétrir tant de lauriers?  
Mon bras, qu'avec respect toute l'Espagne admire,  
Mon bras, qui tant de fois a sauvé cet empire,  
Tant de fois affermi le trône de son Roi,  
Trahit donc ma querrelle, et ne fait rien pour moi!  
O cruel souvenir de ma gloire passée!  
Œuvre de tant de jours en un jour effacée!  
Nouvelle dignité fatale à mon bonheur!  
Précipice élevé d'où tombe mon bonheur!  
Faut-il de votre éclat voir triompher le Comte.  
Et mourir sans vengeance, ou vivre dans la honte?  
Comte, sois de mon Prince à présent gouverneur,  
Ce haut rang n'admet point un homme sans honneur;  
Et ton jaloux orgueil par cet affront insigne,  
Malgré le choix du Roi, m'en a su rendre indigne.  
Et toi, de mes exploits glorieux instrument,  
Mais d'un corps tout de glace inutile ornement,  
Fer jadis tant à craindre, et qui dans cette offense  
M'as servi de parade, et non pas de défense,  
Va, quitte désormais le dernier des humains,  
Passe pour me venger en de meilleures mains.

*Le Cid*, Act I. Sc. 7

These sentiments are certainly not the first that are suggested by the passion of resentment. As the first movements of resentment

are always directed to its object, the very same is the case of grief. Yet with relation to the sudden and severe distemper that seized Alexander bathing in the river Cydnus, Quintus Curtius describes the first emotions of the army as directed to themselves, lamenting that they were left without a leader, far from home, and had scarcely any hopes of returning in safety: their king's distress, which must naturally have been their first concern, occupies them but in the second place, according to that author. In the *Aminta* of Tasso, Sylvia, upon a report of her lover's death, which she believed certain, instead of bemoaning the loss of her beloved, turns her thoughts upon herself, and wonders her heart does not break.

In the tragedy of *Jane Shore*, Alicia, in the full purpose of destroying her rival, has the following reflection:

Oh Jealousy! thou bane of pleasing friendship,  
Thou worst invader of our tender bosoms;  
How does thy rancor poison all our softness,  
And turn our gentle natures into bitterness?  
See where she comes! once my heart's dearest blessing,  
Now my chang'd eyes are blasted with her beauty,  
Loathe that known face, and sicken to behold her.

Act III. Sc. 1.

These are the reflections of a cool spectator. A passion while it has the ascendant, and is freely indulged, suggests not to the person who feels it any sentiment to his own prejudice: reflections like the foregoing occur not readily till the passion has spent its vigor.

A person sometimes is agitated at once by different passions; and the mind, in that case, vibrating like a pendulum, vents itself in sentiments that partake of the same vibration. This I give as a bird observation:

Queen. 'Would I had never trod this English earth,  
Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!  
Ye've angels' faces, but Heaven knows your hearts.  
What shall become of me now? wretched lady!  
I am the most unhappy woman living.  
Alas! poor wenches, where are now your fortunes? [To her women.  
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,  
No friends, no hope! no kindred weep for me!  
Almost no grave allow'd me.

Henry VIII. Act III. Sc. 1.

Othello. Oh devil, devil!  
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.  
Out of my sight!

Desdemona. I will not stay t'offend you.

[going.

Lodovico. Truly, an obedient lady:

I do beseech your Lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress——

Des. My Lord.

Oth. What would you with her, Sir?

Lod. Who, I, my Lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:  
Sir, she can turn and turn, and yet go on;  
And turn again. And she can weep, Sir, weep:  
And she's obedient: as you say, obedient;  
Very obedient—proceed you in your tears—

Concerning this, Sir—oh well painted passion !  
 I am commanded home—get you away,  
 I'll send for you anon—Sir, I obey the mandate,  
 And will return to Venice.—Hence, avaunt ! [Exit Desdemona  
*Othello*, Act IV. Sc. 1.

*Æmilia*. Oh ! my good Lord, I would speak a word with you.  
*Othello*. Yes, 'tis Æmilia—By and by—She's dead.  
 'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death ;  
 The noise was high—Ha ! no more moving !  
 Still as the grave. Shall she come in ? were't good ?  
 I think she stirs again—No—What's the best ?  
 If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife ;  
 My wife ! my wife ! What wife ! I have no wife ;  
 Oh insupportable ! O heavy hour !

*Othello*, Act V. Sc. 2.

A fourth observation is, that nature, which gave us passions, and made them extremely beneficial when moderate, intended, undoubtedly, that they should be subjected to the government of reason and conscience.\* It is, therefore, against the order of nature, that passion in any case should take the lead in contradiction to reason and conscience : such a state of mind is a sort of anarchy, of which every one is ashamed, and endeavors to hide or dissemble. Even love, however laudable, is attended with a conscious shame when it becomes immoderate : it is covered from the world, and disclosed only to the beloved object :

Et que l'amour souvent de remors combattu,  
 Paroisse une foiblesse, et non une vertu.  
*Boileau*, *L'Art Poët.* Chant. 3. l. 101.

O, they love least that let men know their love.  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act I. Sc. 2.

Hence a capital rule in the representation of immoderate passions, that they ought to be hid or dissembled as much as possible. And this holds in an especial manner with respect to criminal passions : one never counsels the commission of a crime in plain terms : guilt must not appear in its native colors, even in thought : the proposal must be made by hints, and by representing the action in some favorable light. Of the propriety of sentiment upon such an occasion, Shakspeare, in the *Tempest*, has given us a beautiful example, in a speech by the usurping Duke of Milan, advising Sebastian to murder his brother the King of Naples : ●

*Antonio*. ————— What might,  
 Worthy Sebastian,—O, what might—no more.  
 And yet, methinks, I see it in thy face,  
 What thou shouldst be : th' occasion speaks thee, and  
 My strong imagination sees a crown  
 Dropping upon thy head.

*Tempest*, Act II. Sc. 1.

There never was drawn a more complete picture of this kind, than that of King John soliciting Hubert to murder the young Prince Arthur :

*K. John*. Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,  
 We owe thee much ; within this wall of flesh

\* See Chap. 2. Part 7.



There is a soul counts thee her creditor,  
 And with advantage means to pay thy love.  
 And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath  
 Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.  
 Give me thy hand, I had a thing to say—  
 But I will fit it with some better time.  
 By Heav'n, Hubert, I'm almost asham'd  
 To say what good respect I have of thee.

*Hubert.* I am much bounden to your Majesty.

*K. John.* Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet—  
 But thou shalt have—and creep time ne'er so slow,  
 Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.  
 I had a thing to say—but let it go;  
 The sun is in the heaven; and the proud day,  
 Attended with the pleasures of the world,  
 Is all too wanton, and too full of gawds,  
 To give me audience. If the midnight bell  
 Did with his iron-tongue and brazen mouth  
 Sound one into the drowsy race of night;  
 If this same were a church-yard where we stand,  
 And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs;  
 Or if that surly spirit Melancholy  
 Had bak'd thy blood, and made it heavy-thick,  
 Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,  
 Making that idiot Laughter keep men's eyes,  
 And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,  
 (A passion hateful to my purposes;)  
 Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,  
 Hear me without thine ears, and make reply  
 Without a tongue, using conceit alone,  
 Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words;  
 Then, in despite of broad-ey'd watchful day,  
 I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.  
 But ah, I will not—Yet I love thee well;  
 And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.

*Hubert.* So well, that what you bid me undertake,  
 Though that my death were adjunct to my act,  
 By Heav'n I'd do't.

*K. John.* Do not I know thou wouldst?  
 Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye  
 On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend;  
 He is a very serpent in my way.  
 And, wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
 He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?

Thou art his keeper.

*King John, Act III. Sc. 3.*

As things are best illustrated by their contraries, I proceed to faulty sentiments, disdaining to be indebted for examples to any but the most approved authors. The first class shall consist of sentiments that accord not with the passion; or, in other words, sentiments that the passion does not naturally suggest. In the second class, shall be ranged sentiments that may belong to an ordinary passion, but unsuitable to it as tinctured by a singular character. Thoughts that properly are not sentiments, but rather descriptions, make a third. Sentiments that belong to the passion represented, but are faulty as being introduced too early or too late, make a fourth. Vicious sentiments exposed in their native dress, instead of being concealed or disguised, make a fifth. And in the last class, shall be collected sentiments suited to no character nor passion, and therefore unnatural.

The first class contains faulty sentiments of various kinds, which I shall endeavor to distinguish from each other; beginning with sentiments that are faulty by being above the tone of the passion:

*Othello.* ————— O my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!  
And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas  
Olympus high, and duck again as low  
As hell's from heaven.

*Othello, Act II. Sc. 1.*

This sentiment may be suggested by violent and inflamed passion, but is not suited to the calm satisfaction that one feels upon escaping danger.

*Philaster.* Place me, some god, upon a pyramid  
Higher than hills of earth, and lend a voice  
Loud as your thunder to me, that from thence  
I may discourse to all the under-world  
The worth that dwells in him.

*Philaster of Beaumont and Fletcher, Act IV.*

Second. Sentiments below the tone of the passion. Ptolemy, by putting Pompey to death, having incurred the displeasure of Cæsar, was in the utmost dread of being dethroned: in that agitating situation, Corneille makes him utter a speech full of cool reflection, that is in no degree expressive of the passion.

Ah! si je t'avois cru, je n'aurois pas de maître,  
Je serois dans le trône où le Ciel m'a fait naître;  
Mais c'est une imprudence assez commune aux rois,  
D'écouter trop d'avis, et se tromper aux choix.  
Le Destin les aveugle au bord du précipice,  
Où si quelque lumière en leur ame se glisse,  
Cette fausse clarté dont il les éblouit.  
Les plonge dans une gouffre, et puis s'évanouit.

*La Mort de Pompée, Act IV. Sc. 1.*

In *Les Frères ennemis* of Racine, the second act is opened with a love-scene. Hemon talks to his mistress of the torments of absence, of the lustre of her eyes, that he ought to die no where but at her feet, and that one moment of absence is a thousand years. Antigone on her part acts the coquette; pretends she must be gone to wait on her mother and brother, and cannot stay to listen to his courtship. This is odious French gallantry, below the dignity of the passion of love: it would scarcely be excusable in painting modern French manners; and is insufferable where the ancients are brought upon the stage. The manners painted in the *Alexandre* of the same author are not more just. French gallantry prevails there throughout.

Third. Sentiments that agree not with the tone of the passion; as where a pleasant sentiment is grafted upon a painful passion, or the contrary. In the following instances the sentiments are too gay for a serious passion:

No happier task these faded eyes pursue;  
To read and weep is all they now can do.

*Eloisa to Abelard, l. 47.*

Again,

Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,  
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;  
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,  
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;  
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,  
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart;  
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,  
And waft a sigh from Indus to the pole.

*Eloisa to Abelard, l. 51.*

These thoughts are pretty: they suit Pope, but not Eloisa.

Satan, enraged by a threatening of the angel Gabriel, answers thus:

Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,  
Proud liminary cherub; but ere then  
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel  
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King  
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,  
Us'd to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels  
In progress through the road of heav'n star-pav'd.

*Paradise Lost, Book IV.*

The concluding epithet forms a grand and delightful image, which cannot be the genuine offspring of rage.

Fourth. Sentiments too artificial for a serious passion. I give for the first example a speech of Percy expiring:

O, Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth:  
I better brook the loss of brittle life,  
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me;  
They wound my thoughts, worse than thy sword my flesh.  
But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool;  
And time, that takes survey of all the world,  
Must have a stop.

*First Part, Henry IV. Act V. Sc. 4.*

Livy inserts the following passage in a plaintive oration of the Locrenses, accusing Pleminius the Roman legate of oppression.

In hoc legato vestro, nec hominis quicquam est, Patres Conscripti, præter figuram et speciem; neque Romani civis, præter habitum vestitumque, et sonum lingue Latinæ. Pestis et bellua immanis, quales fretum, quondam, quo ab Sicilia dividimur, ad perniciem navigantium circumsedisse, fabulæ ferunt.\*

The sentiments of the *Mourning Bride*, are for the most part, no less delicate than just copies of nature: in the following exception the picture is beautiful, but too artful to be suggested by severe grief.

*Almeria.* O no! Time gives increase to my afflictions.  
The circling hours, that gather all the woes  
Which are diffus'd through the revolving year,  
Come heavy laden with th' oppressive weight  
To me; with me, successively they leave  
The sighs, the tears, the groans, the restless cares,  
And all the damps of grief, that did retard their flight.

Conscript fathers! in this your legate there is nought of man save his figure and species; nor is there ought of a Roman citizen save his habit and dress, and the sound of the Latin tongue. He is a pest and a great brute, such as those which the sea that drives us from Sicily is fabled to have engendered for the destruction of sailors. *Titus Livius, l. 29. § 17.*

They shake their downy wings, and scatter all  
The dire collected dews on my poor head ;  
They fly with joy and swiftness from me.

Act I. Sc. 1.

In the same play, Almeria, seeing a dead body, which she took to be Alphonso's, expresses sentiments strained and artificial, which nature suggests not to any person upon such an occasion.

Had they, or hearts, or eyes, that did this deed ?  
Could eyes endure to guide such cruel hands ?  
Are not my eyes guilty alike with theirs,  
That thus can gaze, and yet not turn to stone ?  
—I do not weep ! The springs of tears are dry'd,  
And of a sudden I am calm, as if  
All things were well ; and yet my husband's murder'd !  
Yes, yes, I know to mourn : I'll sluice this heart,  
The source of wo, and let the torrent loose.

Act V. Sc. 2.

*Lady Trueman.* How could you be so cruel to defer giving me that joy which you knew I must receive from your presence ? You have robb'd my life of some hours of happiness that ought to have been in it.

*Drummer, Act V.*

Pope's Elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady, expresses delicately the most tender concern and sorrow that one can feel for the deplorable fate of a person of worth. Such a poem, deeply serious and pathetic, rejects with disdain all fiction. Upon that account, the following passage deserves no quarter ; for it is not the language of the heart ; but of the imagination indulging its flights at ease ; and by that means is eminently discordant with the subject. It would be a still more severe censure, if it should be ascribed to imitation, copying indiscreetly what has been said by others :

What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,  
Nor polish'd marble emulate thy face ?  
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,  
Nor hallow'd dirge be mutter'd o'er thy tomb ?  
Yet shall thy grave with rising flow'rs be drest,  
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast :  
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,  
There the first roses of the year shall blow ;  
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
The ground, now sacred by thy reliques made.

Fifth. Fanciful or finical sentiments. Sentiments that degenerate into point or conceit, however they may amuse in an idle hour, can never be the offspring of any serious or important passion. In the *Jerusalem* of Tasso, Tancred, after a single combat, spent with fatigue and loss of blood, falls into a swoon ; in which situation, understood to be dead, he is discovered by Erminia, who was in love with him without distraction. A more happy situation cannot be imagined, to raise grief in an instant to its height ; and yet, in venting her sorrow, she descends most abominably into antithesis and conceit, even of the lowest kind :

E in lui versò d'inessicabil vena  
Lacrime, e voce di sospiri mista.  
In che misero punto or qui me mena  
Fortuna ! a che veduta amara e trista !

Dopo gran tempo i' ti ritrovo à pena  
 Tancredi, e ti riveggio, e non son vista,  
 Vista non son da te, bensì presente  
 E trovando ti perdo eternamente.

*Canto 19. St. 105.*

Her springs of teares she looseth forth, and cries  
 Hither why bring'st thou me, ah fortune blinde !  
 Where dead, for whom I lived, my comfort lies,  
 Where warre for peace, travell for rest I find ;  
 Tancred, I have thee, see thee, yet thine eies  
 Lookt not upon thy love and handmaide kinde,  
 Undoe their doores, their lids fast closed sever  
 Alas, I find thee for to lose thee ever.

*Fairfax.*

Armida's lamentation respecting her lover Rinaldo,\* is in the same vicious taste.

Queen. Give me no help in lamentation,  
 I am not barren to bring forth complaints :  
 All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes  
 That I, being govern'd by the wat'ry moon,  
 May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world,  
 Ah, for my husband, for my dear Lord Edward.

*King Richard III. Act II. Sc. 2.*

Jane Shore. Let me be branded for the public scorn,  
 Turn'd forth, and driven to wander like a vagabond,  
 Be friendless and forsaken, seek my bread  
 Upon the barren wild, and desolate waste,  
*Feed on my sighs and drink my falling tears ;*  
 Ere I consent to teach my lips injustice,  
 Or wrong the Orphan who has none to save him.

*Jane Shore, Act IV.*

Give me your drops, ye soft-descending rains,  
 Give me your streams, ye never-ceasing springs,  
 That my sad eyes may still supply my duty,  
 And feed an everlasting flood of sorrow.

*Jane Shore, Act V.*

Jane Shore utters her last breath in a witty conceit.

Then all is well, and I shall sleep in peace—  
 'Tis very dark, and I have lost you now—  
 Was there not something I would have bequeath'd you ?  
 But I have nothing left me to bestow,  
 Nothing but one sad sigh. Oh mercy, Heav'n ! *[Dies.*  
*Act V.*

Gilford to Lady Jane Gray, when both were condemned to die.

Thou stand'st unmov'd ;  
 Calm temper sits upon thy beauteous brow ;  
 Thy eyes that flow'd so fast for Edward's loss,  
 Gaze unconcern'd upon the ruin round thee,  
 As if thou hadst resolv'd to brave thy fate,  
 And triumph in the midst of desolation.  
 Ha ! see, it swells, the liquid crystal rises,  
 It starts in spite of thee—but I will catch it,  
 Nor let the earth be wet with dew so rich.

*Lady Jane Gray, Act IV. near the end.*

\* Canto 20. Stan. 124, 125, and 126.

The concluding sentiment is altogether finical, unsuitable to the importance of the occasion, and even to the dignity of the passion of love.

Corneille, in his *Examen of the Cid*,\* answering an objection, that his sentiments are sometimes too much refined for persons in deep distress, observes, that if poets did not indulge sentiments more ingenious or refined than are prompted by passion, their performances would often be low, and extreme grief would never suggest but exclamations merely. This is in plain language to assert, that forced thoughts are more agreeable than those that are natural, and ought to be preferred.

The second class is of sentiments that may belong to an ordinary passion, but are not perfectly concordant with it, as tinged by a singular character.

In the last act of that excellent comedy, *The Careless Husband*, Lady Easy, upon Sir Charles's reformation, is made to express more violent and turbulent sentiments of joy, than are consistent with the mildness of her character:

*Lady Easy*.—O the soft treasure! O the dear reward of long-desiring love.—Thus! thus to have you mine, is something more than happiness; 'tis double life, and madness of abounding joy.

If the sentiments of a passion ought to be suited to a peculiar character, it is still more necessary that actions be suited to the character. In the fifth act of the *Drummer*, Addison makes his gardener act even below the character of an ignorant credulous rustic: he gives him the behavior of a gaping idiot.

The following instances are descriptions rather than sentiments, which compose a third class.

Of this descriptive manner of painting the passions, there is in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, Act V. an illustrious instance, namely, the speech of Theseus, upon hearing of his son's dismal exit. In Racine's tragedy of *Esther*, the Queen hearing of the decree issued against her people, instead of expressing sentiments suitable to the occasion, turns her attention upon herself, and describes with accuracy her own situation:

Juste Ciel! tout mon sang dans mes veines se glace.

Act I. Sc. 3.

Again,

*Aman*. C'en est fait. Mon orgueil est forcé de plier. L'inexorable Aman est réduit à prier.

*Esther*, Act III. Sc. 5.

*Athalie*. Quel prodige nouveau me trouble et m'embarrasse?  
La douceur de sa voix, son enfance, sa grace,  
Font insensiblement à mon inimitié  
Succéder—Je serois sensible à la pitié?

*Athalie*, Act II. Sc. 7.

*Titus*. O de ma passion fureur désespérée!

*Brutus of Voltaire*, Act III. Sc. 6.

What other are the foregoing instances but describing the passion another feels?

A man, stabbed to the heart in a combat with his enemy, expresses himself thus :

So, now I am at rest :——  
 I feel death rising higher still, and higher,  
 Within my bosom ; every breath I fetch  
 Shuts up my life within a shorter compass :  
 And like the vanishing sound of bells, grows less  
 And less each pulse, 'till it be lost in air. Dryden.

Captain Flash, in a farce composed by Garrick, endeavors to hide his fear by saying, "What a damn'd passion I am in."

An example is given above of remorse and despair expressed by genuine and natural sentiments. In the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, Satan is made to express his remorse and despair in sentiments, which, though beautiful, are not altogether natural : they are rather the sentiments of a spectator, than of a person who actually is tormented with these passions.

The fourth class is of sentiments introduced too early or too late.

Some examples mentioned above belong to this class. Add the following from *Venice Preserv'd*, Act V. at the close of the scene between Belvidera and her father Priuli. The account given by Belvidera of the danger she was in, and of her husband's threatening to murder her, ought naturally to have alarmed her relenting father, and to have made him express the most perturbed sentiments. Instead of which, he dissolves into tenderness and love for his daughter, as if he had already delivered her from danger, and as if there were a perfect tranquillity :

Canst thou forgive me all my follies past ?  
 I'll henceforth be indeed a father ; never,  
 Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,  
 Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,  
 Dear as those eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee :  
 Peace to thy heart.

Immoral sentiments exposed in their native colors, instead of being concealed or disguised, compose the fifth class.

The Lady Macbeth, projecting the death of the King, has the following soliloquy :

—————The raven himself is hoarse  
 That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
 Under my battlements. Come all you spirits  
 That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
 And fill me from the crown to th' toe, top-full  
 Of direst cruelty ; make thick my blood,  
 Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,  
 That no compunctious visitings of nature  
 Shake my fell purpose.

*Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.

This speech is not natural. A treacherous murder was never perpetrated, even by the most hardened miscreant, without compunction : and that the lady here must have been in horrible agitation, appears from her invoking the infernal spirits to fill her with cruelty, and to stop up all avenues to remorse. But in that state of mind, it is a never-failing artifice of self-deceit, to draw the thickest veil over the wicked action, and to extenuate it by all the circumstances that



imagination can suggest: and if the crime cannot bear disguise, the next attempt is to thrust it out of mind altogether, and to rush on to action without thought. This last was the husband's method:

Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;  
Which must be acted ere they must be scann'd.

Act III. Sc. 4.

The lady follows neither of these courses, but in a deliberate manner endeavors to fortify her heart in the commission of an execrable crime, without even attempting to color it. This, I think, is not natural; I hope there is no such wretch to be found as is here represented. In the *Pompey* of Corneille,\* Photine counsels a wicked action in the plainest terms without disguise:

Seigneur, n'attirez point le tonnerre en ces lieux,  
Rangez vous du parti des destins et des dieux,  
Et sans les accuser d'injustice, ou d'outrage;  
Puis qu'ils font les heureux, adorez leur ouvrage;  
Quels que soient leurs décrets, déclarez-vous pour eux,  
Et pour leur obéir, perdez le malheureux.  
Pressé de toutes parts des colères célestes,  
Il en vient dessus vous faire fondre les restes;  
Et sa tête qu'à peine il a pû dérober,  
Tout prêt à déchoir, cherche avec qui tomber.  
Sa retraite chez vous en effet n'est qu'un crime;  
Elle marque sa haine, et non pas son estime;  
Il ne vient que vous perdre en venant prendre port,  
Et vous pouvez douter s'il est digne de mort!  
Il devoit mieux remplir nos vœux et notre attente,  
Faire voir sur ses nefs la victoire flottante;  
Il n'eût ici trouvé que joye et que festins;  
Mais puisqu'il est vaincu, qu'il s'en prenne aux destins.  
J'en veux à sa disgrâce et non à sa personne,  
J'exécute à regret ce que le ciel ordonne,  
Et du même poignard, pour César destiné,  
Je perce en soupirant son cœur infortuné,  
Vous ne pouvez enfin qu'aux dépens de sa tête  
Mettre à l'abri la vôtre, et parer la tempête.  
Laissez nommer sa mort un injuste attentat,  
La justice n'est pas une vertu d'état.  
Le choix des actions, ou mauvaises, ou bonnes,  
Ne fait qu'anéantir la force des couronnes;  
Le droit des rois consiste à ne rien épargner;  
La timide équité détruit l'art de régner;  
Quand on craint d'être injuste on a toujours à craindre;  
Et qui veut tout pouvoir doit oser tout enfreindre  
Fuir comme un deshonneur la vertu qui le perd,  
Et voler sans scrupule au crime qui lui sert.

In the tragedy of *Esther*,† Haman acknowledges, without disguise, his cruelty, insolence, and pride. And there is another example of the same kind in the *Agamemnon* of Seneca.‡ In the tragedy of *Athalie*,§ Mathan, in cool blood, relates to his friend many black crimes of which he had been guilty, to satisfy his ambition.

In Congreve's *Double-dealer*, Maskwell, instead of disguising or coloring his crimes, values himself upon them in a soliloquy:

Cynthia, let thy beauty gild my crimes; and whatsoever I commit of treachery

\* Act I. Sc. I.

† Act II. Sc. I.

‡ Beginning of Act II.

§ Act III. Sc. 3. at the close.

or decent, shall be imputed to me as a merit.——Treachery ! what treachery ! Love cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations.

Act II. Sc. 8.

In French plays, love, instead of being hid or disguised, is treated as a serious concern, and of greater importance than fortune, family, or dignity. I suspect the reason to be, that, in the capital of France, love, by the easiness of intercourse, has dwindled down from a real passion to be a connection that is regulated entirely by the mode or fashion.\* This may in some measure excuse their writers, but will never make their plays be relished among foreigners :

*Maxime.* Quoi, trahir mon ami ?

*Euphorbe.* ——— L'amour rend tout permis,  
Un véritable amant ne connoît point d'amis.

*Cinna,* Act III. Sc. 1.

*César.* Reine, tout est paisible, et la ville calmée,  
Qu'un trouble assez léger avoit trop alarmée,  
N'a plus à redouter le divorce intestin  
Du soldat insolent, et du peuple mutin.  
Mais, ô Dieux ! ce moment que je vous ai quittée,  
D'un trouble bien plus grand a mon ame agitée,  
Et ces soins importuns qui m'arrachent de vous  
Contre ma grandeur même allumoient mon courroux.  
Je lui voulois du mal de m'être si contraire,  
De rendre ma présence ailleurs si nécessaire,  
Mais je lui pardonnois au simple souvenir  
Du bonheur qu'à ma flamme elle a fait obtenir.  
C'est elle dont je tiens cette haute espérance,  
Qui flatte mes desirs d'une illustre apparence,  
Et fait croire à César qu'il peut former des vœux,  
Qu'il n'est pas tout-à fait indigne de vos feux,  
Et qu'il peut en prétendre une juste conquête,  
N'ayant plus que les Dieux au dessus de sa tête.  
Oui, Reine, si quelqu'un dans ce vaste univers  
Pouvoit porter plus haut la gloire de vos fers ;  
S'il étoit quelque trône où vous puissiez paroître  
Plus dignement assise en captivant son maître,  
J'irois, j'irois à lui, moins pour le lui ravir,  
Que pour lui disputer le droit de vous servir ;  
Et je n'aspirerois au bonheur de vous plaire,  
Qu'après avoir mis bas un si grand adversaire.  
C'étoit pour acquérir un droit si précieux,  
Que combattoit partout mon bras ambitieux,  
Et dans Pharsale même il a tiré l'épée  
Plus pour le conserver, que pour vaincre Pompée.  
Je l'ai vaincu, princesse, et le Dieu des combats  
M'y favorisoit moins que vos divins appas.  
Ils conduisoient ma main, ils enflamoient mon courage,  
Cette pleine victoire est leur dernier ouvrage,  
C'est l'effet des ardeurs qu'ils daignoient m'inspirer  
Et vos beaux yeux enfin m'ayant fait soupirer,  
Pour faire que votre ame avec gloire y réponde,  
M'ont rendu le premier, et de Rome, et du monde  
C'est ce glorieux titre, à présent effectif ;  
Que je viens ennoblir par celui de captif ;  
Heureux, si mon esprit gagne tant sur le vôtre,  
Qu'il en estime l'un, et me permette l'autre.

*Pompée,* Act IV. Sc. 3.

\* A certain author says humorously, " Les mots mêmes d'amour et d'amant sont bannis de l'intime société des deux sexes, et relégués avec ceux de chair et de flamme dans les Romans qu'on ne lit plus." And where nature is once banished, a fair field is open to every fantastic imitation, even the most extravagant.

The last class comprehends sentiments that are unnatural, as being suited to no character nor passion. These may be subdivided into three branches: first, sentiments unsuitable to the constitution of man, and to the laws of his nature; second, inconsistent sentiments; third, sentiments that are pure rant and extravagance.

When the fable is of human affairs, every event, every incident, and every circumstance, ought to be natural, otherwise the imitation is imperfect. But an imperfect imitation is a venial fault, compared with that of running contrary to nature. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides,\* Hippolytus, wishing for another self in his own situation, How much (says he) should I be touched with his misfortune! as if it were natural to grieve more for the misfortunes of another than for one's own.

*Osmyn.* Yet I behold her—yet—and now no more.  
Turn your lights inward, eyes, and view my thought.  
So shall you still behold her—'twill not be.  
O impotence of sight! mechanic sense  
Which to exterior objects ow'st thy faculty,  
Not seeing of election, but necessity.  
Thus do our eyes, as do all common mirrors,  
Successively reflect succeeding images.  
Nor what they would, but must; a star or toad;  
Just as the hand of chance administers!

*Mourning Bride, Act II. Sc. 8.*

No man, in his senses, ever thought of applying his eyes to discover what passes in his mind; far less of blaming his eyes for not seeing a thought or idea. In Moliere's *L'Avare*,† Harpagon being robbed of his money, seizes himself by the arm, mistaking it for that of the robber. And again he expresses himself as follows:

*Je veux aller quérir la justice, et faire donner la question à toute ma maison; à servantes, à valets, à fils, à fille, et à moi aussi.*

This is so absurd as scarcely to provoke a smile, if it be not at the author.

Of this second branch the following are examples.

—————Now bid me run,  
And I will strive with things impossible,  
Yea get the better of them.

*Julius Caesar, Act II. Sc. 3.*

*Vos mains seules ont droit de vaincre un invincible.*

*Le Cid, Act V. Sc. last.*

*Que son nom soit béni. Que son nom soit chanté,  
Que l'on célèbre ses ouvrages  
Au delà de l'éternité.*

*Esther, Act V. Sc. last.*

*Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell;  
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide;  
To which the hell I suffer seems a heav'n.*

*Paradise Lost, Book IV.*

\* Act IV. Sc. 5.

† Act IV. Sc. 7.

Of the third branch, take the following samples  
 Lucan, talking of Pompey's sepulchre,

—————Romanum nomen, et omne  
 Imperium Magno est tumuli modus. Obrue saxa  
 Crimine plena deum. Si tota est Herculis Oeta,  
 Et juga tota vacant Bromio Nyseia; quare  
 Unus in Egypto Magno lapis? Omnia Lagi  
 Rura tenere potest, si nullo cespite nomen  
 Hæserit. Erremus populi, cinerumque tuorum,  
 Magne, metu nullas Nili calcemus arenas. L. 8. l. 793

Thus in Rowe's translation:

Where there are seas, or air, or earth, or skies,  
 Where-e'er Rome's empire stretches, Pompey lies.  
 Far be the vile memorial then convey'd!  
 Nor let this stone the partial gods upbraid  
 Shall Hercules all Oeta's heights demand,  
 And Nyssa's hill for Bacchus only stand,  
 While one poor pebble is the warrior's doom  
 That fought the cause of liberty and Rome?  
 If fate decrees he must in Egypt lie,  
 Let the whole fertile realm his grave supply,  
 Yield the wide country to his awful shade  
 Nor let us dare on any part to tread,  
 Fearful we violate the mighty dead. }

The following passages are pure rant. Coriolanus, speaking  
 to his mother,

—————What is this?  
 Your knees to me? to your corrected son?  
 Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach  
 Fillip the stars: then let the mutinous winds  
 Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun:  
 Murd'ring impossibility, to make  
 What cannot be, slight work.

*Coriolanus, Act V. Sc. 3*

*Cæsar.* ————Danger knows full well,  
 That Cæsar is more dangerous than he.  
 We were two lions litter'd in one day,  
 And I the elder and more terrible.

*Julius Cæsar, Act II. Sc. 4*

*Almahide.* ————This day  
 I gave my faith to him, he his to me.

*Almanzor.* Good heaven, thy book of fate before me lay  
 But to tear out the journal of this day.  
 Or if the order of the world below,  
 Will not the gap of one whole day allow,  
 Give me that minute when she made that vow,  
 That minute e'en the happy from their bliss might give,  
 And those who live in grief a shorter time would live,  
 So small a link if broke, th' eternal chain,  
 Would like divided waters join again.

*Conquest of Grenada, Act III*

*Almanzor.* ————I'll hold it fast  
 As life: when life's gone, I'll hold this last,  
 And if thou tak'st after I am slain,  
 I'll send my ghost to fetch it back again.

*Conquest of Grenada, Part 1. l. 11*

*Lyndiraza.* A crown is come, and will not fate  
 And yet I feel something like death is near.  
 My guards, my guards ———

Let not that ugly skeleton appear.  
 Sure destiny mistakes; this death's not mine;  
 She doats, and means to cut another line.  
 Tell her I am a queen—but 'tis too late;  
 Dying, I charge rebellion on my fate;  
 Bow down, ye slaves ———  
 Bow quickly down and your submission show;  
 I'm pleas'd to taste an empire ere I go. [Dies.  
*Conquest of Grenada, Part 2. Act V*

*Ventidius.* But you, ere love misled your wand'ring eyes  
 Were, sure, the chief and best of human race,  
 Fram'd in the very pride and boast of nature,  
 So perfect, that the gods who formed you wonder'd  
 At their own skill, and cry'd, a lucky hit  
 Has mended our design.

*Dryden, All for Love, Act I.*

Not to talk of the impiety of this sentiment, it is ludicrous instead of being lofty.

The famous epitaph on Raphael is no less absurd than any of the foregoing passages:

Raphel, timuit, quo sospite, vinci  
 Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori.

imitated by Pope in his Epitaph on Sir Godfrey Kneller:

Living, great nature fear'd he might outvie  
 Her works; and dying, fears herself might die.

Such is the force of imitation; for Pope, of himself, would never have been guilty of a thought so extravagant.

So much upon sentiments; the language proper for expressing them, comes next in order.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### LANGUAGE OF PASSION.

Man has a propensity to communicate his passions and emotions—Venting a passion gives relief—Immoderate grief is silent, because it fills the mind—Immoderate love and revenge silent—Surprise and terror silent—They express in words, only the capital circumstances—Language should be adopted to the sentiment and passion—Elevated sentiments require elevated language—Tender sentiments, soft and flowing language—Figures give an agreeable character to sentiment—Gross errors, of passions expressed in flowing in an unequal course—The language of violent passion, interrupted and broken, soliloquies particularly—Authors apt to use language above their tone of mind—To use language too figurative for the dignity and importance of the subject, an error—Language too light and airy for a serious passion—A thought that turns upon one expression instead of the subject—Expressions which have no distinct meaning.

Among the particulars that compose the social part of our nature, propensity to communicate our opinions, our emotions, and every thing that affects us, is remarkable. Bad fortune and injustice affect us greatly; and of these we are so prone to complain, that if we have no friend nor acquaintance to take part in our sufferings, we sometimes utter our complaints aloud, even where there are none to listen.

But this propensity operates not in every state of mind. A man immoderately grieved, seeks to afflict himself, rejecting all consolation: immoderate grief accordingly is mute: complaining is struggling for consolation

It is the wretch's comfort still to have  
Some small reserve of near and inward wo,  
Some unsuspected hoard of inward grief,  
Which they unseen may wail, and weep, and mourn,  
And glutton-like alone devour.

*Mourning Bride, Act I. Sc. 1.*

When grief subsides, it then and no sooner finds a tongue: we complain, because complaining is an effort to disburden the mind of its distress.\*

Surprise and terror are silent passions for a different reason: they agitate the mind so violently as, for a time, to suspend the exercise of its faculties, and among others the faculty of speech.

Love and revenge, when immoderate, are not more loquacious than immoderate grief. But when these passions become moderate, they set the tongue free, and, like moderate grief, become loquacious: moderate love, when unsuccessful, is vented in complaints; when successful, is full of joy expressed by words and gestures.

As no passion has any long uninterrupted existence,† nor bears always with an equal pulse, the language suggested by passion is not only unequal, but frequently interrupted: and even during an uninterrupted fit of passion, we only express in words the more capital sentiments. In familiar conversation, one who vents every single thought is justly branded with the character of *loquacity*; because sensible people express no thoughts but what make some figure: in the same manner, we are only disposed to express the strongest pulses of passion, especially when it returns with impetuosity after interruption.

I formerly had occasion to observe,‡ that the sentiments ought to be turned to the passion, and the language to both. Elevated sentiments require elevated language: tender sentiments ought to be clothed in words that are soft and flowing: when the mind is depressed with any passion, the sentiments must be expressed in words that are humble, not low. Words being intimately connected with the ideas

\* This observation is finely illustrated by a story which Herodotus records, b. 2. Cambyzes, when he conquered Egypt, made Psammenitus the king prisoner; and for trying his constancy, ordered his daughter to be dressed in the habit of a slave, and to be employed in bringing water from the river; his son also was led to execution with a halter about his neck. The Egyptians vented their sorrow in tears and lamentations; Psammenitus only, with a downcast eye, remained silent. Afterward meeting one of his companions, a man advanced in years, who, being plundered of all, was begging alms, he wept bitterly, calling him by his name Cambyzes, struck with wonder, demanded an answer to the following question: "Psammenitus, thy master, Cambyzes, is desirous to know, why, after thou hast seen thy daughter so ignominiously treated, and thy son led to execution, without exclaiming or weeping, thou shouldst be so highly concerned for a poor man, in way related to thee?" Psammenitus returned the following answer: "Son of Cyrus, the calamities of my family are too great to leave me the power of weeping; but the misfortunes of a companion, reduced in his old age to want of bread, is a fit subject for lamentation."

† See Chap. 2. Part 3.

‡ Chap. 16.

they represent, the greatest harmony is required between them: to express, for example, an humble sentiment in high sounding words, is disagreeable by a discordant mixture of feelings; and the discord is not less when elevated sentiments are dressed in low words:

Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.

Indignatur item privatis ac prope socco

Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyestæ.

*Horace, Ars Poet. l. 89.*

A comic subject will not hold  
If 'tis in tragic measure told;  
Besides, it would an audience shock,  
In verses fitter for the sock  
The Thyestean feast to tell.

This, however, excludes not figurative expression, which, within moderate bounds, communicates to the sentiment an agreeable elevation. We are sensible of an effect directly opposite, where figurative expression is indulged beyond a just measure: the opposition between the expression and the sentiment, makes the discord appear greater than it is in reality.\*

At the same time, figures are not equally the language of every passion: pleasant emotions, which elevate or swell the mind, vent themselves in strong epithets and figurative expression; but humbling and dispiriting passions affect to speak plain:

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.

Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque;

Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,

Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.

*Horace, Ars Poet. l. 95.*

And sometimes in the tragic scene  
You've wailings, melancholy—mean.  
Peleus and Telephus, when poor,  
And exiles, will no more endure  
Their rants and raving ten feet high  
If they would to the heart apply.

Figurative expression, being the work of an enlivened imagination, cannot be the language of anguish or distress. Otway, sensible of this, has painted a scene of distress in colors finely adapted to the subject: there is scarcely a figure in it, except a short and natural simile with which the speech is introduced. Belvidera talking to her father of her husband:

Think you saw what past at our last parting  
Think you beheld him like a raging lion,  
Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps,  
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain  
Of burning fury; think you saw his one hand  
Fix'd on my throat, while the extended other  
Grasp'd a keen threat'ning dagger, oh, 'twas thus  
We last embrac'd; when, trembling with revenge,  
He dragg'd me to the ground, and at my bosom  
Presented horrid death: cried out; My friends!  
Where are my friends? swore, wept, rag'd, threaten'd, lov'd  
For he yet lov'd, and that dear love preserv'd me  
To this last trial of a father's pity.

\* See this explained more particularly in Chap. 8.



I fear not death, but cannot bear a thought  
 That that dear hand should do th' unfriendly office;  
 If I was ever then your care, now hear me;  
 Fly to the senate, save the promised lives  
 Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice.

*Venice Preserv'd, Act V.*

To preserve the foresaid resemblance between words and their meaning, the sentiments of active and hurrying passions ought to be dressed in words where syllables prevail that are pronounced short or fast; for these make an impression of hurry and precipitation. Emotions, on the other hand, that rest upon their objects, are best expressed by words where syllables prevail that are pronounced long or slow. A person affected with melancholy has a languid and slow train of perceptions: the expression best suited to that state of mind, is where words, not only of long but of many syllables, abound in the composition; and, for that reason, nothing can be finer than the following passage.

In those deep solitudes, and awful cells,  
 Where heav'nly-pensive Contemplation dwells,  
 And ever-musing melancholy reigns.

*Pope, Eloisa to Abelard.*

To preserve the same resemblance, another circumstance is requisite, that the language, like the emotion, be rough or smooth, broken or uniform. Calm and sweet emotions are best expressed by words that glide softly: surprise, fear, and other turbulent passions, require an expression both rough and broken.

It cannot have escaped any diligent inquirer into nature, that, in the hurry of passion, one generally expresses that thing first which is most at heart: \* which is beautifully done in the following passage.

Me, me; adsum qui feci: in me convertite ferrum,  
 O Rutuli, mea fraus omnis.

*Æneid, IX. 427.*

Me—me—I'm here, I did it—turn your swords  
 On me, oh Rutuleans—mine was all the fraud.

Passion has often the effect of redoubling words, the better to make them express the strong conception of the mind. This is finely imitated in the following examples.

—————Thou sun, said I, fair light!  
 And thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay!  
 Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains!  
 And ye that live, and move, fair creatures! tell,  
 Tell if ye saw, how came I thus, how here—————

*Paradise Lost, book VIII. 273*

—————Both have sinn'd! but thou  
 Against God only; I, 'gainst God and thee:  
 And to the place of judgment will return.  
 There with my cries importune Heaven, that all

\* Demetrius Phalereus (of Elocution, sect. 28.) justly observes, that an accurate adjustment of the words to the thought, so as to make them correspond in every particular, is only proper for sedate subjects; for that passion speaks plain, and rejects all refinements.

The sentence, from thy head remov'd, may light  
On me, sole cause to thee of all this wo;  
Me! me! only just object of his ire.

*Paradise Lost*, book X. 930.

Shakspeare is superior to all other writers in delineating passion. It is difficult to say in what part he most excels, whether in moulding every passion to peculiarity of character, in discovering the sentiments that proceed from various tones of passion, or in expressing properly every different sentiment: he disgusts not his reader with general declamation and unmeaning words, too common in other writers: his sentiments are adjusted to the peculiar character and circumstances of the speaker: and the propriety is no less perfect between his sentiments and his diction. That this is no exaggeration, will be evident to every one of taste, upon comparing Shakspeare with other writers in similar passages. If upon any occasion he falls below himself, it is in those scenes where passion enters not: by endeavoring in that case to raise his dialogue above the style of ordinary conversation, he sometimes deviates into intricate thought and obscure expression: sometimes, to throw his language out of the familiar, he employs rhyme. But may it not, in some measure, excuse Shakspeare, I shall not say his works, that he had no pattern, in his own or in any living language, of dialogue fitted for the theatre? At the same time, it ought not to escape observation, that the stream clears in its progress, and that in his later plays he has attained the purity and perfection of dialogue; an observation that, with greater certainty than tradition, will direct us to arrange his plays in the order of time. This ought to be considered by those who rigidly exaggerate every blemish of the finest genius for the drama ever the world enjoyed: they ought also for their own sake to consider, that it is easier to discover his blemishes, which lie generally at the surface, than his beauties, which can be truly relished by those only who dive deep into human nature. One thing must be evident to the meanest capacity, that wherever passion is to be

\* Of this take the following specimen:

They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our ambition; and, indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin,)  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason  
Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausible manners; that these men  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
(Being nature's livery, or fortune's scar,)  
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault.

*Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. 7.

displayed, nature shows itself mighty in him, and is conspicuous by the most delicate propriety of sentiment and expression.\*

I return to my subject, from a digression from which I cannot repent. That perfect harmony which ought to subsist among all the constituent parts of a dialogue, is a beauty no less rare than conspicuous: as to expression in particular, were I to give instances, where, in one or other of the respects above mentioned, it corresponds not precisely to the characters, passions, and sentiments, I might from different authors collect volumes. Following, therefore, the method laid down in the chapter of sentiments, I shall confine my quotations to the grosser errors, which every writer ought to avoid.

And, first, of passion expressed in words flowing in an equal course without interruption.

In the chapter above cited, Corneille is censured for the impropriety of his sentiments: and here, for the sake of truth, I am obliged to attack him a second time. Were I to give instances from that author of the fault under consideration, I might transcribe whole tragedies; for he is no less faulty in this particular, than in passing upon us his own thoughts as a spectator, instead of the genuine sentiments of passion. Nor would a comparison between him and Shakspeare, upon the present article, redound more to his honor, than the former upon the sentiments. Racine is here less incorrect than Corneille; and from him, therefore, I shall gather a few instances. The first shall be the description of the sea-monster in his *Phædra*, given by Theramene, the companion of Hippolytus. Theramene is represented in terrible agitation, which appears from the following passage, so boldly figurative as not to be excused but by violent perturbation of mind:

Le ciel avec horreur voit ce monstre sauvage,  
La terre s'en émeut, l'air en est infecté,  
Le flot, qui l'apporta, recule épouvanté.

Yet Theramene gives a long pompous connected description of that event, dwelling upon every minute circumstance, as if he had been only a cool spectator:

A peine nous sortions des portes de Trézène,  
Il étoit sur son char. Ses gardes affligés  
Imitoient son silence, autour de lui rangés.  
Il suivoit tout pensif le chemin de Mycènes.  
Sa main sur les chevaux laissoit flotter les rênes.  
Ses superbes coursiers qu'on voyoit autrefois  
Pleins d'une ardeur si noble obéir à sa voix,  
L'œil morne maintenant et la tête baissée,  
Sembloient se conformer à sa triste pensée, &c.

Act V. Sc. 6.

\* The critics seem not perfectly to comprehend the genius of Shakspeare. His plays are defective in the mechanical part; which is less the work of genius than of experience, and is not otherwise brought to perfection but by diligently observing the errors of former compositions. Shakspeare excels all the ancients and moderns in knowledge of human nature, and in unfolding even the most obscure and refined emotions. This is a rare faculty, and of the greatest importance in a dramatic author; and it is that faculty which makes him surpass all other writers in the comic as well as tragic vein.

The last speech of Atalide, in the tragedy of *Bajazet*, of the same author, is a continued discourse; and but a faint representation of the violent passion which forced her to put an end to her own life.

Enfin, c'en est donc fait. Et par mes artices,  
 Mes injustes soupçons, mes funestes caprices,  
 Je suis donc arrivée au douloureux moment,  
 Où je vois, par mon crime, expirer mon amant.  
 N'étoit-ce pas assez, cruelle destinée,  
 Qu'à lui survivre, hélas! je fusse condamnée?  
 Et falloit-il encor que, pour comble d'horreurs,  
 Je ne pusse imputer sa mort qu'à mes fureurs!  
 Oui, c'est moi, cher amant, qui t'arrache la vie;  
 Roxane, ou le Sultan, ne te l'ont point ravie.  
 Moi seule, j'ai tissu le lien malheureux  
 Dont tu viens d'éprouver les détestables nœuds.  
 Et je puis, sans mourir, en souffrir la pensée?  
 Moi, qui n'ai pu tantôt, de ta mort menacée,  
 Retenir mes esprits, prompts à m'abandonner!  
 Ah! n'ai-je eu de l'amour que pour t'assassiner?  
 Mais c'en est trop. Il faut par un prompt sacrifice,  
 Que ma fidelle main te venge, et me punisse.  
 Vous, de qui j'ai troublé la gloire et le repos,  
 Héros, qui deviez tous revivre en ce héros,  
 Toi, mère malheureuse, et qui dès notre enfance,  
 Me confias son cœur dans une autre espérance,  
 Infortuné Visir, amis désespérés,  
 Roxane, venez tous contre moi conjurés,  
 Tourmenter à la fois une amante éperdue; [Elle se tue.  
 Et prenez la vengeance enfin qui vois est dûe.

Act V. Sc. last.

Though works, not authors, are the professed subject of this critical undertaking, I am tempted, by the present speculation, to transgress, once again, the limits prescribed, and to venture a cursory reflection upon that justly celebrated author; that he is always sensible, generally correct, never falls low, maintains a moderate degree of dignity, without reaching the sublime, paints delicately the tender affections, but is a stranger to the genuine language of enthusiastic or fervid passion.

If, in general, the language of violent passion ought to be broken and interrupted, soliloquies ought to be so in a peculiar manner: language is intended by nature for society: and a man when alone, though he always clothes his thoughts in words, seldom gives his words utterance, unless when prompted by some strong emotion; and even then by starts and intervals only.\* Shakspeare's soliloquies may be justly established as a model; for it is not easy to conceive any model more perfect: of his many incomparable soliloquies, I confine myself to the two following, being different in their manner.

*Hamlet.* Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!  
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,  
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,

\* Soliloquies accounted for, Chap. 15.

That grows to seed : things rank and gross in nature  
 Possess it merely.—That it should come to this !  
 But two months dead ! nay, not so much ; not two ;—  
 So excellent a king, that was, to this,  
 Hyperion to a satyr : so loving to my mother,  
 That he permitted not the winds of heav'n  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heav'n and earth !  
 Must I remember—why, she would hang on him,  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on ; yet, within a month—  
 Let me not think—Frailty, thy name is *Women* !  
 A little month ! or ere those shoes were old,  
 With which she followed my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears—Why she, ev'n she—  
 (O heav'n ! a beast that wants discourse of reason,  
 Would have mourn'd longer)—married with mine uncle,  
 My father's brother ; but no more like my father,  
 Than I to Hercules. Within a month !  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her gauled eyes,  
 She married—Oh, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !  
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good.  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 3.*

*Ford.* Hum ! ha ! is this a vision ? is this a dream ? do I sleep ? Mr. Ford, awake ; awake, Mr. Ford ; there's a hole made in your best coat ; Mr. Ford ! this 'tis to be married ! this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets ! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am ; I will now take the leacher ; he is at my house ; he cannot 'scape me ; 'tis impossible he should ; he cannot creep into a halfpenny-purse, nor into a pepper-box. But lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places, though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Sc. last.*

These soliloquies are accurate and bold copies of nature : in a passionate soliloquy one begins with thinking aloud ; and the strongest feelings only, are expressed ; as the speaker warms, he begins to imagine one listening, and gradually slides into a connected discourse.

How far distant are soliloquies generally from these models ? So far, indeed, as to give disgust instead of pleasure. The first scene of *Iphigenia* in Tauris discovers that princess, in a soliloquy, gravely reporting to herself her own history. There is the same impropriety in the first scene of *Alcestes*, and in the other introductions of Euripides, almost without exception. Nothing can be more ridiculous : it puts one in mind of a most curious device in Gothic paintings, that of making every figure explain itself by a written label issuing from its mouth. The description which a parasite, in the *Eunuch* of Terence,\* gives of himself, makes a sprightly soliloquy : but it is not consistent with the rules of propriety ; for no man, in his ordinary state of mind, and upon a familiar subject, ever thinks of talking aloud to himself. The same objection lies against a soliloquy in the *Adelphi* of the same author.† The soliloquy which makes the third scene, act third, of his *Heicyra*, is insufferable ; for there Pamphilus, soberly and circumstantially, relates to himself an adventure which had happened to him a moment before.

\* Act II. Sc. 2.

Act I. Sc. 1

Corneille is not more happy in his soliloquies than in his dialogue. Take for a specimen the first scene of *Cinna*.

Racine also is extremely faulty in the same respect. His soliloquies are regular harangues, a chain completed in every link, without interruption or interval: that of Antiochus in *Berenice*\* resembles a regular pleading, where the parties *pro* and *con* display their arguments at full length. The following soliloquies are equally faulty: *Bajazet*, act 3. sc. 7; *Mithridate*, act 3. sc. 4. and act 4 sc. 5; *Iphigenia*, act 4. sc. 8.

Soliloquies upon lively or interesting subjects, but without any turbulence of passion, may be carried on in a continued chain of thought. If, for example, the nature and sprightliness of the subject prompt a man to speak his thoughts in the form of a dialogue, the expression must be carried on without break or interruption, as in a dialogue between two persons; which justifies Falstaff's soliloquy upon honor.

What need I be so forward with Death, that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter, Honor pricks me on. But how if Honor prick me off, when I come on? how then? Can Honor set a leg? No: or an arm? No: or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is Honor? A word.—What is that word *honor*? Air; a trim reckoning.—Who hath it? He that dy'd a Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is it insensible then? Yes, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it; honor is a mere scutcheon; and so ends my catechism.

*First Part Henry IV. Act V. Sc. 1.*

And even without dialogue, a continued discourse may be justified, where a man reasons in a soliloquy upon an important subject; for if in such a case it be at all excusable to think aloud, it is necessary that the reasoning be carried on in a chain; which justifies that admirable soliloquy in *Hamlet* upon life and immortality, being a serene meditation upon the most interesting of all subjects. And the same consideration will justify the soliloquy that introduces the 5th act of Addison's *Cato*.

The next class of the grosser errors which all writers ought to avoid, shall be of language elevated above the tone of the sentiment; of which take the following instances:

*Zara.* Swift as occasion, I  
Myself will fly; and earlier than the morn  
Wake thee to freedom. Now 'tis late; and yet  
Some news few minutes past arriv'd, which seem'd  
To shake the temper of the King.—Who knows  
What racking cares disease a monarch's bed?  
Or love, that late at night still lights his lamp,  
And strikes his rays through dusk, and folded lids,  
Forbidding rest, may stretch his eyes awake,  
And force their balls abroad at this dead hour.  
I'll try.

*Mourning Bride, Act III. Sc. 4.*

The language here is undoubtedly too pompous and labored for describing so simple a circumstance as absence of sleep. In the following passage, the tone of the language, warm and plaintive, is well suited to the passion, which is recent grief: but every one will

be sensible, that in the last couplet save one, the tone is changed, and the mind suddenly elevated to be let fall as suddenly in the last couplet :

Il déteste à jamais sa coupable victoire,  
 Il renonce à la cour, aux humains, à la gloire  
 Et se fuit lui-même, au milieu des deserts,  
 Il va cacher sa peine au bout de l'univers ;  
*La, soit que le soleil rendit le jour au monde,*  
*Soit qu'il finit sa course au vaste sein de l'onde*  
 Sa voix faisoit redire aux échos attendris,  
 Le nom, le triste nom, de son malheureux fils.

*Henriade, Chant. VIII. 229.*

Language too artificial or too figurative for the gravity, dignity, or importance, of the occasion, may be put in a third class.

Chimene demanding justice against Rodrigue who killed her father, instead of a plain and pathetic expostulation, makes a speech stuffed with the most artificial flowers of rhetoric :

Sire, mon père est mort, mes yeux ont vu son sang  
 Couler à gros bouillons de son généreux flanc ;  
 Ce sang qui tant de fois garantit vos murailles,  
 Ce sang qui tant de fois vous gagna des batailles,  
 Ce sang qui, tout sorti, fume encore de courroux  
 De se voir répandu pour d'autres que pour vous,  
 Qu'au milieu des hazards n'osait verser la guerre,  
 Rodrigue en votre cour vient d'en couvrir la terre.  
 J'ai couru sur le lieu sans force, et sans couleur :  
 Je l'ai trouvé sans vie. Excusez ma douleur,  
 Sire ; la voix me manque à ce récit funeste,  
 Mes pleurs et mes soupirs vous diront mieux le reste.

And again,

Son flanc étoit ouvert, et, pour mieux m'émouvoir,  
 Son sang sur la poussière écrivoit mon devoir ;  
 Ou plutôt sa valeur en cet état réduite  
 Me parloit par sa plaie, et hâtoit ma poursuite,  
 Et pour se faire entendre au plus juste des Rois,  
 Par cette triste bouche elle empruntoit ma voix.

*Act II. Sc. 9.*

Nothing can be contrived in language more averse to the tone of the passion than this florid speech : I should imagine it more apt to provoke laughter than to inspire concern or pity.

In a fourth class shall be given specimens of language too light or airy for a severe passion.

Imagery and figurative expression are discordant, in the highest degree, with the agony of a mother, who is deprived of two hopeful sons by a brutal murder. Therefore the following passage is undoubtedly in a bad taste.

*Queen.* Ah, my poor princes ! ah, my tender babes !  
 My unblown flow'rs, new appearing sweets !  
 If yet your gentle souls fly in the air,  
 And be not fixt in doom perpetual,  
 Hover about me with your airy wings,  
 And hear your mother's lamentation.

*Richard III. Act IV. Sc. 4.*

Again,

*K. Philip.* You are as fond of grief as of your child.



*Constance.* Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garment with his form;  
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

*King John*, Act III. Sc. 4.

A thought that turns upon the expression instead of the subject, commonly called a *play of words*, being low and childish, is unworthy of any composition, whether gay or serious, that pretends to any degree of elevation: thoughts of this kind make a fifth class.

In the *Amynta* of Tasso,\* the lover falls into a mere play of words, demanding how he who had lost himself, could find a mistress. And for the same reason, the following passage in Corneille has been generally condemned:

*Chimene.* Mon père est mort, Elvire, et la première à pé  
Dont s'est armé Rodrigue a sa trame coupée.  
Pleurez, pleurez, mes yeux, et fondez-vous en eau:  
La moitié de ma vie a mis l'autre au tombeau,  
Et m'oblige à venger, après ce coup funeste,  
Celle que je n'ai plus, sur celle qui me reste.

*Cid*, Act III. Sc. 3.

To die is to be banish'd from myself:  
And Sylvia is myself; banish'd from her,  
Is self from self; a deadly banishment!

*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act III. Sc. 1.

*Countess.* I pray thee, lady, have a better cheer:  
If thou engrossest all the griefs as thine,  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety.

*All's well that ends well*, Act III. Sc. 2.

*K. Henry.* O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!  
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,  
What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?  
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,  
Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants.

*Second Part Henry IV.* Act IV. Sc. 4.

Antony, speaking of Julius Cæsar:

O world! thou wast the forest of this hart  
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
How like a deer, stricken by many princes,  
Dost thou here lie!

*Julius Cæsar*, Act III. Sc. 1.

Playing thus with the sound of words, which is still worse than a pun, is the meanest of all conceits. But Shakspeare, when he descends to a play of words, is not always in the wrong: for it is done sometimes to denote a peculiar character, as in the following passage:

*K. Philip.* What say'st thou, boy? look in the lady's face.  
*Lewis.* I do, my lord, and in her eye I find  
A wonder, or a wond'rous miracle;  
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye;  
Which being but the shadow of your son,  
Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow.  
I do protest, I never lov'd myself  
Till now infixed I beheld myself

\* Act 1. Sc. 2.

Drawn in the flatt'ring table of her eye.

*Faulconbridge.* Drawn in the flatt'ring table of her eye!  
Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow  
And quarter'd in her heart! he doth espy  
Himself Love's traitor: this is pity now,  
That hang'd, and drawn, and quarter'd, there should be,  
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

*King John, Act II. Sc. 2*

A jingle of words is the lowest species of that low wit; which is scarcely sufferable in any case, and least of all in an heroic poem: and yet Milton, in some instances, has descended to that puerility

And brought into the world a world of wo.  
——begirt th' Almighty throne  
Beseeching or besieging——  
Which tempted our attempt——  
At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound.  
————— With a shout  
Loud as from number without numbers.

One should think it unnecessary to enter a caveat against an expression that has no meaning, or no distinct meaning; and yet somewhat of that kind may be found even among good writers. Such make a sixth class.

*Sebastian.* I beg no pity for this mould'ring clay;  
For if you give it burial, there it takes  
Possession of your earth:  
If burnt and scatter'd in the air: the winds  
That strew my dust, diffuse my royalty,  
And spread me o'er your clime; for where one atom  
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.

*Dryden, Don Sebastian King of Portugal, Act I.*

*Cleopatra.* Now, what news, my Charmion?  
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?  
Am I to live or die? nay, do I live?  
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer  
Fate took the word, and then I liv'd or dy'd.

*Dryden, All for Love, Act II.*

If she be coy, and scorn my noble fire,  
If her chill heart I cannot move;  
Why, I'll enjoy the very love,  
And make a mistress of my own desire.

*Cowley, poem inscribed, The Request.*

His whole poem, inscribed, *My Picture*, is a jargon of the same kind.

————— 'Tis he, they cry, by whom  
Not men, but war itself is overcome.

*Indian Queen.*

Such empty expressions are finely ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*:

Was't not unjust to ravish hence her breath,  
And in life's stead to leave us nought but death.

*Act IV Sc. 1.*

## CHAPTER XVIII

## BEAUTY OF LANGUAGE.

Painting and sculpture alone of the fine arts, imitative—A beauty of language, distinct from the beauty of the thought it expresses—Of different words conveying the same thought, that which best answers the end is most beautiful—Beauties of language arising from sound—Beauty of sound—Beauty of signification—The resemblance between sound and signification—Beauty of verse.

Of all the fine arts, painting and sculpture only, are in their nature imitative. An ornamented field is not a copy or imitation of nature, but nature itself embellished. Architecture is productive of originals, and copies not from nature. Sound and motion may, in some measure, be imitated by music; but for the most part music, like architecture, is productive of originals. Language copies not from nature, more than music or architecture; unless, where, like music, it is imitative of sound or motion. Thus, in the description of particular sounds, language sometimes furnishes words, which, besides their customary power of exciting ideas, resemble, by their softness or harshness, the sounds described; and there are words which, by the celerity or slowness of pronunciation, have some resemblance to the motion they signify. The imitative power of words goes one step farther: the loftiness of some words makes them proper symbols of lofty ideas; a rough subject is imitated by harsh-sounding words; and words of many syllables pronounced slow and smooth, are expressive of grief and melancholy. Words have a separate effect on the mind abstracted from their signification and from their imitative power: they are more or less agreeable to the ear, by the fulness, sweetness, faintness, or roughness of their tones.

These are but faint beauties, being known to those only who have more than ordinary acuteness of perception. Language possesses a beauty superior greatly in degree, of which we are eminently sensible when a thought is communicated with perspicuity and sprightliness. This beauty of language, arising from its power of expressing thought, is apt to be confounded with the beauty of the thought itself: the beauty of thought, transferred to the expression, makes it appear more beautiful.\* But these beauties, if we wish to think accurately, must be distinguished from each other. They are in reality so distinct, that we sometimes are conscious of the highest pleasure language can afford, when the subject expressed is disagreeable: a thing that is loathsome, or a scene of horror to make one's hair stand on end, may be described in a manner so lively, as that the disagreeableness of the subject shall not even obscure the agreeableness of the

\* Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 5. Demetrius Phalereus (of Elocution, sect. 75.) makes the same observation. We are apt, says that author, to confound the language with the subject; and if the latter be nervous, we judge the same of the former. But they are clearly distinguishable; and it is not uncommon to find subjects of great dignity dressed in mean language. Theopompus is celebrated for the force of his diction; but erroneously: his subject indeed has great force, but his style very little.

description. The causes of the original beauty of language, considered as significant, which is a branch of the present subject, will be explained in their order. I shall only at present observe, that this beauty is the beauty of means fitted to an end, that of communicating thought: and hence it evidently appears, that of several expressions all conveying the same thought, the most beautiful, in the sense now mentioned, is that which in the most perfect manner answers it end.

The several beauties of language above mentioned, being of different kinds, ought to be handled separately. I shall begin with those beauties of language that arise from sound; after which will follow the beauties of language considered as significant: this order appears natural; for the sound of a word is attended to, before we consider its signification. In a third section come those singular beauties of language that are derived from a resemblance between sound and signification. The beauties of verse are handled in the last section: for though the foregoing beauties are found in verse as well as in prose, yet verse has many peculiar beauties, which, for the sake of connection, must be brought under one view; and versification, at any rate, is a subject of so great importance as to deserve a place by itself.

#### SECTION I.

Sounds of different letters—Syllables—Words—A period or sentence—Discourse—The manner in which the vowels are sounded—The vowels form a regular series of sounds from high to low—All agreeable—The medium vowels most so—A consonant has no sound—Syllables into which consonants enter, have more than one sound—The sounds of syllables as many as the letters—A double sound more agreeable than a single—Difference between pronunciation and music, with respect to sound—The source of the agreeableness or disagreeableness of words—The most agreeable successions formed, when the cavity of the mouth is alternately increased and diminished, within moderate limits, and where long and short syllables follow one another—A standard to all nations of the comparative merit of their languages—Not possible, however, to form a complete standard—A rough language preferable to a smooth one, when it has a sufficient number of smooth sounds—The English tongue originally harsh, but at present much softened—Remarks on the dropping in of words that end in *ed*—The effect of ascending and descending in a series varying by small differences—The effect where it varies by large differences, where contrast prevails—The effect of a strong impulse succeeding a weak one; and also of a weak impulse succeeding a strong one—The maxim founded on this—Direction for arranging the different members of a sentence.

THIS subject requires the following order: The sounds of the different letters come first: next, these sounds as united in syllables: third, syllables united in words: fourth, words united in a period: and, in the last place, periods united in a discourse.

With respect to the first article, every vowel is sounded with a single expiration of air from the wind-pipe, through the cavity of the mouth. By varying this cavity, the different vowels are sounded; for the air in passing through cavities differing in size, produces various sounds, some high or sharp, some low or flat: a small cavity occasions a high sound, a large cavity a low sound. The five vowels accordingly, pronounced with the same extension of the wind-pipe, but with different openings of the mouth, form a regular series

of sounds, descending from high to low, in the following order, *i, e, a, o, u*.<sup>\*</sup> Each of these sounds is agreeable to the ear: and if it be required which of them is the most agreeable, it is, perhaps safest to hold, that those vowels which are the farthest removed from the extremes, will be the most relished. This is all I have to remark upon the first article: for consonants being letters that of themselves have no sound, serve only in conjunction with vowels to form articulate sounds; and as every articulate sound makes a syllable, consonants come naturally under the second article; to which we proceed.

A consonant is pronounced with a less cavity than a vowel; and consequently every syllable into which a consonant enters, must have more than one sound, though pronounced with one expiration of air, or with one breath as commonly expressed: for however readily two sounds may unite, yet where they differ in tone, both of them must be heard if neither of them be suppressed. For the same reason, every syllable must be composed of as many sounds as there are letters, supposing every letter to be distinctly pronounced.

We next inquire, how far syllables are agreeable to the ear. Few tongues are so polished, as entirely to have rejected sounds that are pronounced with difficulty; and it is a noted observation, that such sounds are to the ear harsh and disagreeable. But with respect to agreeable sounds, it appears, that a double sound is always more agreeable than a single sound: every one who has an ear must be sensible, that the diphthong *oi* or *ai* is more agreeable than any of these vowels pronounced singly: the same holds where a consonant enters into the double sound; the syllable *le* has a more agreeable sound than the vowel *e*, or than any vowel. And in support of experience, a satisfactory argument may be drawn from the wisdom of Providence: speech is bestowed on man, to qualify him for society; and his provision of articulate sounds is proportioned to the use he has for them; but if sounds that are agreeable singly, were not also agreeable in conjunction, the necessity of a painful selection would render language intricate and difficult to be attained in any perfection; and this selection, at the same time, would abridge the number of useful sounds, so as, perhaps, not to leave sufficient for answering the different ends of language.

In this view, the harmony of pronunciation differs widely from that of music properly so called. In the latter are discovered many sounds singly agreeable, which in conjunction are extremely disagreeable; none but what are called *concordant sounds* having a good effect in conjunction. In the former, all sounds, singly agreeable, are in conjunction concordant; and ought to be, in order to fulfil the purposes of language.

Having discussed syllables, we proceed to words; which make the third article. Monosyllables belong to the former head; polysyllables open a different scene. In a cursory view, one would imagine, that the agreeableness or disagreeableness of a word with

\* In this scale of sounds, the letter *i* must be pronounced as in the word *interest*, and as in other words beginning with the syllable *in*; the letter *e* as in *persuasion*; the letter *a* as in *bat*; and the letter *u* as in *number*.

respect to its sound, should depend upon the agreeableness or disagreeableness of its component syllables: which is true in part, but not entirely; for we must also take under consideration, the effect of syllables in succession. In the first place, syllables in immediate succession, pronounced each of them, with the same, or nearly the same aperture of the mouth, produce a succession of weak and feeble sounds; witness the French words *dit-il*, *pathétique*: on the other hand, a syllable of the greatest aperture succeeding one of the smallest, or the contrary, makes a succession, which, because of its remarkable disagreeableness, is distinguished by a proper name, *hiatus*. The most agreeable succession is, where the cavity is increased and diminished alternately within moderate limits: examples, *alternative*, *longevity*, *pusillanimous*. Secondly, words consisting wholly of syllables pronounced slow, or of syllables pronounced quick, commonly called *long* and *short syllables*, have little melody in them; witness the words *petitioner*, *fruiterer*, *dizziness*: on the other hand, the intermixture of long and short syllables is remarkably agreeable; for example, *degree*, *repent*, *wonderful*, *altitude*, *rapidity*, *independent*, *impetuosity*.\* The cause will be explained hereafter, in treating of versification.

Distinguishable from the beauties above mentioned, there is a beauty of some words which arises from their signification: when the emotion raised by the length or shortness, the roughness or smoothness, of the sound, resembles, in any degree, what is raised by the sense, we feel a very remarkable pleasure. But this subject belongs to the third section.

The foregoing observations afford a standard to every nation, for estimating, pretty accurately, the comparative merit of the words that enter into their own language: but they are not equally useful in comparing the words of different languages; which will thus appear. Different nations judge differently of the harshness or smoothness of articulate sounds; a sound, for example, harsh and disagreeable to an Italian, may be abundantly smooth to a northern ear: here every nation must judge for itself; nor can there be any solid ground for a preference, when there is no common standard to which we can appeal. The case is precisely the same as in behavior and manners: plain-dealing and sincerity, liberty in words and actions, form the character of one people; politeness, reserve, and a total disguise of every sentiment that can give offence, form the character of another people: to each the manners of the other are disagreeable. An effeminate mind cannot bear the least of that roughness and severity which is generally esteemed manly, when exerted upon proper occasions: neither can an effeminate ear bear the harshness of certain words, that are deemed nervous and sounding by those accustomed to a rougher tone of speech. Must we then relinquish all thoughts of comparing languages in point of roughness and smoothness, as a

\* Italian words, like those of Latin and Greek, have this property almost universally: English and French words are generally deficient. In the former, the long syllable is removed from the end, as far as the sound will permit; and in the latter, the last syllable is generally long. For example, *Senator* in English, *Senātor* in Latin, and *Senatēur* in French.

fruitless inquiry? Not altogether; for we may proceed a certain length, though without hope of an ultimate decision. A language pronounced with difficulty even by natives, must yield to a smoother language: and supposing two languages pronounced with equal facility by natives, the rougher language, in my judgment, ought to be preferred, provided, it be also stored with a competent share of more mellow sounds; which will be evident from attending to the different effects that articulate sound has on the mind. A smooth gliding sound is agreeable, by calming the mind, and lulling it to rest: a rough bold sound, on the contrary, animates the mind; the effort perceived in pronouncing, is communicated to the hearers, who feel in their own minds a similar effort, rousing their attention, and disposing them to action. I add another consideration: the agreeableness of contrast in the rougher language, for which the great variety of sounds gives ample opportunity, must, even in an effeminate ear, prevail over the more uniform sounds of the smoother language.\* This appears all that can be safely determined upon the present point. With respect to the other circumstances that constitute the beauty of words, the standard above mentioned is infallible when applied to foreign languages as well as to our own: for every man, whatever be his mother-tongue, is equally capable to judge of the length or shortness of words, of the alternate opening and closing of the mouth in speaking, and of the relation that the sound bears to the sense: in these particulars, the judgment is susceptible of no prejudice from custom, at least of no invincible prejudice.

That the English tongue, originally harsh, is at present much softened by dropping in the pronunciation many redundant consonants, is undoubtedly true: that it is not capable of being farther mellowed without suffering in its force and energy, will scarcely be thought by any one who possesses an ear; and yet such in Britain is the propensity for dispatch, that, overlooking the majesty of words composed of many syllables aptly connected, the prevailing taste is to shorten words, even at the expence of making them disagreeable to the ear, and harsh in the pronunciation. But I have no occasion to insist upon this article, being prevented by an excellent writer, who possessed, if any man ever did, the true genius of the English tongue.† I cannot, however, forbear urging one observation, borrowed from that author: several tenses of our verbs are formed by adding the final syllable *ed*, which, being a weak sound, has remarkably the worse effect by possessing the most conspicuous place in the word: upon which account, the vowel in common speech is generally suppressed, and the consonant added to the foregoing syllable; whence the following rugged sounds, *drudg'd*, *disturb'd*, *rebuk'd*, *fledg'd*. It is still less excusable to follow this practice in writing; for the hurry of speaking may excuse what would be altogether

\* That the Italian tongue is too smooth, seems probable, from considering, that in versification, vowels are frequently suppressed, in order to produce a rougher and bolder tone.

† See Swift's proposal for correcting the English tongue, in a letter to the Earl of Oxford.



improper in composition: the syllable *ed*, it is true, sounds poorly at the end of a word; but rather that defect, than multiply the number of harsh words, which, after all, bear an over-proportion in our tongue. The author above mentioned, by showing a good example, did all in his power to restore that syllable; and he well deserves to be imitated. Some exceptions however I would make. A word that signifies labor or any thing harsh or rugged, ought not to be smooth; therefore *forc'd* with an apostrophe, is better than *forced*, without it. Another exception is where the penult syllable ends with a vowel; in that case the final syllable *ed* may be apostrophized without making the word harsh: examples, *betray'd*, *carry'd*, *destroy'd*, *employ'd*.

The article next in order, is the music of words as united in a period. And as the arrangement of words in succession so as to afford the greatest pleasure to the ear, depends on principles remote from common view, it will be necessary to premise some general observations upon the appearance that objects make, when placed in an increasing or decreasing series. Where the objects vary by small differences, so as to have a mutual resemblance, we, in ascending, conceive the second object of no greater size than the first, the third of no greater size than the second, and so of the rest; which diminishes, in appearance, the size of every object except the first: but when, beginning at the greatest object, we proceed gradually to the least, resemblance makes us imagine the second as great as the first, and the third as great as the second; which in appearance magnifies every object except the first. On the other hand, in a series varying by large differences, where contrast prevails, the effects are directly opposite: a great object succeeding a small one of the same kind, appears greater than usual; and a little object succeeding one that is great, appears less than usual.\* Hence a remarkable pleasure in viewing a series ascending by large differences; directly opposite to what we feel when the differences are small. The least object of a series ascending by large differences has the same effect upon the mind, as if it stood single without making a part of the series: but the second object, by means of contrast, appears greater than when viewed singly and apart; and the same effect is perceived in ascending progressively, till we arrive at the last object. The opposite effect is produced in descending; for in this direction, every object, except the first, appears less than when viewed separately and independent of the series. We may then assume as a maxim, which will hold in the composition of language as well as of other subjects, that a strong impulse succeeding a weak, makes double impression on the mind; and that a weak impulse succeeding a strong, makes scarcely any impression.

After establishing this maxim, we can be at no loss about its application to the subject in hand. The following rule is laid down by Diomedes.† “In verbis observandum est, ne a majoribus ad minora descendat oratio; melius enim dicitur, *Vir est optimus*, quàm, *Vir optimus est*.” This rule is also applicable to entire mem-

\* See the reason, Chap. 8.

† De structura perfectæ orationis, l. 2.

bers of a period, which, according to our author's expression, ought not, more than single words, to proceed from the greater to the less, but from the less to the greater.\* In arranging the members of a period, no writer equals Cicero: the beauty of the following examples out of many, will not suffer me to slur them over by a reference

Quicum quæstor fueram,  
Quicum me sors consuetudoque majorum,  
Quicum me deorum hominumque judicium conjunxerat.†

Again:

Habet honorem quem petimus,  
Habet spem quam præpositam nobis habemus,  
Habet existimationem, multo sudore, labore, vigiliisque, collectam.‡

Again:

Eripite nos ex miseriis,  
Eripite nos ex faucibus eorum,  
Quorum crudelitas nostro sanguine non potest expleri.§

*De Oratore*, l. 1. § 52.

This order of words or members gradually increasing in length, may, as far as concerns the pleasure of sound, be denominated a *climax in sound*.

The last article is the music of periods as united in a discourse; which shall be dispatched in a very few words. By no other human means is it possible to present to the mind, such a number of objects, and in so swift a succession, as by speaking or writing; and for that reason, variety ought more to be studied in these, than in any other sort of composition. Hence a rule for arranging the members of different periods with relation to each other, that to avoid a tedious uniformity of sound and cadence, the arrangement, the cadence, and the length of the members, ought to be diversified as much as possible: and if the members of different periods be sufficiently diversified, the periods themselves will be equally so. -

\* See Demetrius Phalereus of Elocution, § 18.

† With whom I was quæstor—with whom the fortunes and the customs of our ancestors—with whom the judgment of gods and men had joined me.

‡ He, whom we seek, hath honor—he hath the hope which we have set before us— he hath esteem, gained by much sweat, labor and vigils.

§ Snatch us from our miseries—snatch us from the jaws of those whose cruelty cannot be satisfied, but with our blood.

## SECTION II.

Beauty of language with respect to signification, divided into words, and arrangement—Perspicuity not to be sacrificed to any other beauty—Want of perspicuity arising from defect in arrangement—Giving different names to the same thing in the same sentence, another error—The language to accord with the subject—An accordance of a peculiar kind—The impression made by the word and by the thought to be the same—The conjunction and disjunction contained in the sentiment to be imitated in the expression—Connected members of a thought, to be expressed by connected members of a sentence—Alliteration—A connection in words, when there is none in thought, a deformity—A verbal antithesis—The union of a negative and an affirmative proposition, unpleasant—Two distinct ideas not to be put in the same sentence—To crowd them into a member of a sentence still worse—In describing resembling objects, a resemblance in the members of the sentence to be studied—In words also—Opposition to be studied, in words that express contrasted objects—The scene not to be changed—Remarks on the use of the copulative—Arrangement, the second kind of beauty—Words that import relation, to be distinguished from those that do not—Declension and juxtaposition used by the Greeks and the Latins to express relation—Juxtaposition, the principal method used in English—The relation between substantives expressed by particles—The same true with respect to qualities—Difference between natural and inverted order—When the natural order may be departed from—Remarks on inversion, and its advantages—The two kinds of ambiguities, occasioned by wrong arrangement—Examples illustrative of these errors, with the observations upon them—A pronoun to be placed as near as possible to its noun—The depression or elevation of an object—Many circumstances not to be used—A circumstance to be disposed of as soon as possible—A sentence to be closed with the most important word—The longest member of a sentence to bring up the rear—When liveliness of expression is demanded, the sense to be brought out at the end—Why an inverted style is pleasing—A short period lively, a long solemn—A sentence to be closed with the former—Long and short syllables to be intermixed—Natural order beautiful; inverted not.

It is well said by a noted writer,\* “That by means of speech we can divert our sorrows, mingle our mirth, impart our secrets, communicate our counsels, and make mutual compacts and agreements to supply and assist each other.” Considering speech as contributing to so many good purposes, words that convey clear and distinct ideas, must be one of its capital beauties. This cause of beauty, is too extensive to be handled as a branch of any other subject: for to ascertain with accuracy even the proper meaning of words, not to talk of their figurative power, would require a large volume; an useful work indeed, but not to be attempted without a large stock of time, study, and reflection. This branch, therefore, of the subject, I humbly decline. Nor do I propose to exhaust all the other beauties of language that relate to signification: the reader, in a work like the present, cannot fairly expect more than a slight sketch of those that make the greatest figure. This task is the more to my taste, as being connected with certain natural principles; and the rules I shall have occasion to lay down, will, if I judge rightly, be agreeable illustrations of these principles. Every subject must be of importance that tends to unfold the human heart; for what other science is of greater use to human beings?

\* Scot's Christian Life.

The present subject is too extensive to be discussed without dividing it into parts; and what follows suggests a division into two parts. In every period, two things are to be regarded: first, the words of which it is composed; next, the arrangement of these words; the former resembling the stones that compose a building, and the latter resembling the order in which they are placed. Hence the beauties of language with respect to signification, may not improperly be distinguished into two kinds: first, the beauties that arise from a right choice of words or materials for constructing the period; and next, the beauties that arise from a due arrangement of these words or materials. I begin with rules that direct us to a right choice of words, and then proceed to rules that concern their arrangement.

And with respect to the former, communication of thought being the chief end of language, it is a rule, that perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed to any other beauty whatever. If it should be doubted whether perspicuity be a positive beauty, it cannot be doubted that the want of it is the greatest defect. Nothing, therefore, in language ought more to be studied, than to prevent all obscurity in the expression; for to have no meaning, is but one degree worse, than to have a meaning that is not understood. Want of perspicuity from a wrong arrangement, belongs to the next branch. I shall here give a few examples where the obscurity arises from a wrong choice of words; and as this defect is too common in the ordinary herd of writers to make examples from them necessary, I confine myself to the most celebrated authors.

Livy, speaking of a rout after a battle,

Multique in ruina *major*e quàm fuga oppressi obtruncatique.

L. 4. § 46

And many in a ruin *greater* than flight, were crushed and slain.

This author is frequently obscure, by expressing but part of his thought, leaving it to be completed by his reader. His description of the sea-fight, l. 28. cap. 30. is extremely perplexed.

Unde tibi reditum *certo sublemine* Parcae  
Rupere.

Horace, Epod. XIII. 22.

From whence (the Fates have spun it so,)  
You shall not be allowed to go  
Home.—

Qui persæpe cava testudine flevit amorem,  
*Non elaboratum ad pedem.*

Horace, Epod. XIV. 11.

Who often lamented his love on the hollow shell, to no labored foot.

Me fabulosæ Vulture in Appulo,  
Altriciæ extra limen Apuliæ,  
Ludo, fatigatumque somno,  
Fronde nova puerum palumbæ  
Texere.

Horace, Carm. l. 3. ode 4.

Me tired with sleep, and yet a child  
From kind Apulia's bounds beguiled,  
Up in mount Vultur, now so famed and known,  
The woodland doves concealed with foliage newly blown.

Purus rivus aquæ silvaque jugerum  
 Paucorum, et segetis certa fides mea,  
 Fulgentem imperio fertilis Africæ  
*Fallit sorte beator.*

*Horace, Carm. l. 3. ode 16.*

A wood of moderate extent,  
 And stream of purest element,  
 And harvest home secure,  
 Make me more happy than the weight  
 Of Africa's precarious state  
 Of empire, could ensure.

Cum fas atque nefas exiguo *sine* libidinum  
 Discernunt avidi.

*Horace, Carm. l. 1. ode 18.*

—————Right and wrong  
 Confounding in their lust.

Ac spem fronte serenat.

*Æneid. IV. 471.*

And makes hope serene on his forehead.

I am in greater pain about the foregoing passages, than about any I have ventured to criticise, being aware that a vague or obscure expression, is apt to gain favor with those who neglect to examine it with a critical eye. To some it carries the sense that they relish the most: and by suggesting various meanings at once, it is admired by others as concise and comprehensive: which by the way fairly accounts for the opinion generally entertained with respect to most languages in their infant state, of expressing much in few words. This observation may be illustrated by a passage from Quintilian, quoted in the first volume for a different purpose.

At quæ Polycleto defuerunt, Phidiæ atque Alcameni dantur. Phidias tamen diis quam hominibus efficiendis melior artifex traditur: in ebore vero, longe citra æmulum, vel si nihil nisi Minervam Athenis, aut Olympium in Elide Jovem fecisset, *cujus pulchritudo adjecisse aliquid etiam receptæ religioni videtur; adeo majestas operis Deum æquat.*\*

The sentence in the Italic characters appeared to me abundantly perspicuous, before I gave it peculiar attention. And yet to examine it independent of the context, its proper meaning is not what is intended: the words naturally import, that the beauty of the statues mentioned, appears to add some new tenet or rite to the established religion, or appears to add new dignity to it; and we must consult the context before we can gather the true meaning; which is, that the Greeks were confirmed in the belief of their established religion by these majestic statues, so like real divinities.

There may be a defect in perspicuity proceeding even from the slightest ambiguity in construction; as where the period commences with a member conceived to be in the nominative case, which afterward is found to be in the accusative. Example: "Some emotions more peculiarly connected with the fine arts, I propose to handle in separate chapters."† Better thus: "Some emotions more peculiarly

\* But Phidias and Alcamenes possess those qualities which were denied to Polycletus. Phidias, however, is said to be a better artificer of *gods* than of *men*—in ivory, indeed, he is far beyond his rival, even if he had made nothing except his Minerva at Athens, or his Olympian Jove in Elis, whose beauty seems to have even added something to the received religion; so much has the majesty of the work represented a god.

† *Elements of Criticism*, Vol. I. p. 43. edit. 1.

connected with the fine arts, are proposed to be handled in separate chapters."

I add another error against perspicuity, which I mention, the rather, because with some writers it passes for a beauty. It is the giving of different names to the same object, mentioned oftener than once in the same period. Example: Speaking of the English adventurers who first attempted the conquest of Ireland, "and instead of reclaiming the natives from their uncultivated manners, they were gradually assimilated to the ancient inhabitants, and degenerated from the customs of their own nation." From this mode of expression, one would think the author meant to distinguish *the ancient inhabitants* from *the natives*; and we cannot discover otherwise than from the sense, that these are only different names given to the same object for the sake of variety. But perspicuity ought never to be sacrificed to any other beauty, which leads me to think that the passage may be improved as follows: "and degenerating from the customs of their own nation, they were gradually assimilated to the natives, instead of reclaiming them from their uncultivated manners."

The next rule in order, because next in importance is, that the language ought to correspond to the subject. Heroic actions or sentiments require elevated language; tender sentiments ought to be expressed in words soft and flowing; and plain language void of ornament, is adapted to subjects grave and didactic. Language may be considered as the dress of thought; and where the one is not suited to the other, we are sensible of incongruity, in the same manner as where a judge is dressed like a fop, or a peasant like a man of quality. Where the impression made by the words resembles the impression made by the thought, the similar emotions mix sweetly in the mind, and double the pleasure;\* but where the impressions made by the thought and the words are dissimilar, the unnatural union into which they are forced, is disagreeable.†

This concordance between the thought and the words has been observed by every critic, and is so well understood as not to require any illustration. But there is a concordance of a peculiar kind, that has scarcely been touched in works of criticism, though it contributes to neatness of composition. It is what follows. In a thought of any extent, we commonly find some parts intimately united, some slightly, some disjoined, and some directly opposed to each other. To find these conjunctions and disjunctions imitated in the expression, is a beauty; because such imitation makes the words concordant with the sense. This doctrine may be illustrated by a familiar example. When we have occasion to mention the intimate connection that the soul has with the body, the expression ought to be, *the soul and body*; because the particle *the*, relative to both, makes a connection in the expression, resembling, in some degree, the connection in the thought: but when the soul is distinguished from the body, it is better to say *the soul and the body*; because the disjunction in the words resembles the disjunction in the thought. I proceed to other examples, beginning with conjunctions.

\* Chap. 2. Part 4

† Ibid

Constituit agmen; et expedire tela animosque, equitibus jussis,\* &c.

*Livy*, l. 38. § 25.

Here the words that express the connected ideas are artificially connected by subjecting them both to the regimen of one verb. And the two following are of the same kind.

Quum ex paucis quotidie aliqui eorum caderent aut vulnerarentur, et qui superarent, fessi et corporibus et animis essent,† &c.

*Livy*, l. 38. § 29.

Post acer Mnestheus adducto constitit arcu,  
Alta petens, pariterque oculos telumque tetendit.

*Æneid*, v. 507.

Then Mnestheus to the head his arrow drove  
With lifted eyes, and took his aim above.

But to justify this artificial connection among the words, the ideas they express ought to be intimately connected; for otherwise that concordance which is required between the sense and the expression will be impaired. In that view, a passage from Tacitus is exceptionable; where words that signify ideas very little connected, are, however, forced into an artificial union. Here is the passage:

Germania omnis a Galliis, Rhætiisque, et Pannoniis, Rheno et Danubio fluminibus; a Sarmatis Dacisque, mutuo metu aut montibus separatur.‡

*De Moribus Germanorum*.

Upon the same account, I esteem the following passage equally exceptionable.

————— The fiend look'd up, and knew  
His mounted scale aloft; nor more, but fled  
Murm'ring, and with him fled the shades of night.

*Paradise Lost*, B. 4. at the end.

There is no natural connection between a person's flying or retiring, and the succession of daylight to darkness; and therefore to connect artificially the terms that signify these things cannot have a sweet effect.

Two members of a thought connected by their relation to the same action, will naturally be expressed by two members of the period governed by the same verb; in which case these members, in order to improve their connection, ought to be constructed in the same manner. This beauty is so common among good writers, as to have been little attended to; but the neglect of it is remarkably disagreeable: For example, "He did not mention Leonora, nor that her father was dead." Better thus: "He did not mention Leonora, nor her father's death."

Where two ideas are so connected, as to require but a copulative, it is pleasant to find a connection in the words that express these ideas, were it even so slight as where both begin with the same letter:

\* He put his army in order—and the horsemen were ordered to have their weapons and their minds ready.

† When some of the few daily fell or were wounded, and those who remained were sick in body and mind.

‡ Germany is separated from the Gauls, the Rhetians, and the Pannonians, by the Rhine and the Danube; from the Sarmatians and the Dacians, by mutual fear and the mountains.



The peacock, in all his pride, does not display half the colour that appears in the garments of a British lady, when she is either dressed for a ball or a birth-day  
*Spectator*, No. 265.

Had not my dog of a steward run away as he did, without making up his accounts, I had still been immersed in sin and sea-coal.  
*Ibid.* No. 530

My life's companion, and my bosom-friend,  
One faith, one fame, one fate shall both attend.

*Dryden, Translation of Æneid.*

There is sensibly a defect in neatness when uniformity in this case is totally neglected;\* witness the following example, where the construction of two members connected by a copulative is unnecessarily varied.

For it is confidently reported, that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who, upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, have made a discovery that there was no God, and *generously communicating* their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke for blasphemy.† [Better thus:—]—having made a discovery that there was no God, and having generously communicated their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, &c.

He had been guilty of a fault, for which his master would have put him to death, had he not found an opportunity to escape out of his hands, and *fled* into the deserts of Numidia.  
*Guardian*, No. 139.

If all the ends of the Revolution are already obtained, it is not only impertinent to argue for obtaining any of them, but *factionous designs might be imputed*, and the name of incendiary be applied with some colour, perhaps, to any one who should persist in pressing this point. *Dissertation upon Parties*. Dedication.

Next as to examples of disjunction and opposition in the parts of the thought, imitated in the expression; an imitation that is distinguished by the name of *antithesis*.

Speaking of Coriolanus soliciting the people to be made consul:

With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds. *Coriolanus*.

Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men?  
*Julius Cæsar*.

He hath cool'd my friends and heated mine enemies. *Shakspeare*.

An artificial connection among the words, is undoubtedly a beauty when it represents any peculiar connection among the constituent parts of the thought; but where there is no such connection, it is a positive deformity, as above observed, because it makes a discordance between the thought and expression. For the same reason we ought also to avoid every artificial opposition of words where there is none in the thought. This last, termed *verbal antithesis*, is studied by low writers, because of a certain degree of liveliness in it. They do not consider how incongruous it is, in a grave composition, to cheat the reader, and to make him expect a contrast in the thought, which upon examination is not found there.

A *light* wife doth make a *heavy* husband. *Merchant of Venice*.

Here is a studied opposition in the words, not only without any opposition in the sense, but even where there is a very intimate con-

\* See Girard's French Grammar, Discourse 12.

† An argument against abolishing Christianity. *Swift*.

nection, that of cause and effect; for it is the levity of the wife that torments the husband.

Will maintain  
Upon his *bad* life to make all this *good*.  
*King Richard II.* Act I. Sc. 1.

*Lucetta.* What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

*Julia.* If thou respect them, best to take them up.

*Lucetta.* Nay, I was *taken up* for *laying them down*.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona,* Act I. Sc. 2.

A fault directly opposite to that last mentioned, is to conjoin artificially words that express ideas opposed to each other. This is a fault too gross to be in common practice; and yet writers are guilty of it in some degree, when they conjoin, by a copulative, things transacted at different periods of time. Hence a want of neatness in the following expression.

The nobility too, whom the king had no means of retaining by suitable offices and preferments, had been seized with the general discontent, and unwarily threw themselves into the scale which began already too much to preponderate.

*History of Great Britain,* vol. I. p. 250.

In periods of this kind, it appears more neat to express the past time by the participle passive, thus:

The nobility having been seized with the general discontent, unwarily threw themselves, &c. (or) The nobility, who had been seized, &c. unwarily threw themselves, &c.

It is unpleasant to find even a negative and affirmative proposition connected by a copulative:

Nec excitatur classico miles truci,  
Nec horret iratum mare;  
Forumque vitat, et superba civium  
Potentiorum limina. *Horace, Epod. 2. l. 5.*

Him no dread trump alarms  
To take the soldier's arms,  
Nor need he fear the stormy main—  
The noisy bar he shuns  
Nor to the levy runs  
Of men whose station makes them vain.

If it appear not plain, and prove untrue,  
Deadly divorce step between me and you. *Shakspeare.*

In mirth and drollery it may have a good effect to connect verbally things that are opposite to each other in the thought. Example: Henry IV. of France introducing the Mareschal Biron to some of his friends, "Here, gentlemen," says he, "is the Mareschal Biron, whom I freely present both to my friends and enemies."

This rule of studying uniformity between the thought and expression, may be extended to the construction of sentences or periods. A sentence or period ought to express one entire thought or mental proposition; and different thoughts ought to be separated in the expression by placing them in different sentences or periods. It is therefore offending against neatness, to crowd into one period entire thoughts requiring more than one; which is joining in language things that are separated in reality. Of errors against this rule take the following examples.

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant: also our bed is green.

Cæsar, describing the Suevi:

Atque in eam se consuetudinem adduxerunt, ut locus frigidissimis, neque vestitus, præter pelles, habeant quidquam, quarum propter exiguitatem, magna est corporis pars aperta, et laventur in fluminibus.\* *Commentaria*, l. 4. prin.

Burnet, in the history of his own times, giving Lord Sunderland's character, says,

His own notions were always good; but he was a man of great expense.

I have seen a woman's face break out in heats, as she has been talking against a great lord, whom she had never seen in her life; and indeed never knew a party-woman that kept her beauty for a twelvemonth. *Spectator*, No. 57.

Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of Strada:

I single him out among the moderns, because he had the foolish presumption to censure Tacitus, and to write history himself; and your lordship will forgive this short excursion in honor of a favorite writer.

*Letters on History*, Vol. I. Let. 5.

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, (for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining,) but however sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst tolerable; I say, it seems to me, that the Author of nature has thought fit to mingle from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men.

*Bolingbroke, on the Spirit of Patriotism*, Let. I.

To crowd into a single member of a period different subjects, is still worse than to crowd them into one period:

—————Trojam, genitore Adamasto  
Paupere (mansissetque utinam fortuna) profectus.

*Æneid*, III. 614.

—————I came  
To Troy, and Achamenides my name,  
Me, my poor father with Ulysses sent,  
(Oh, had I stayed, with poverty content!)

From conjunctions and disjunctions in general, we proceed to comparisons, which make one species of them, beginning with similes. And here also, the intimate connection that words have with their meaning, requires that in describing two resembling objects, a resemblance in the two members of the period ought to be studied. To illustrate the rule in this case, I shall give various examples of deviation from it; beginning with resemblances expressed in words that have no resemblance.

I have observed of late, the style of some great ministers very much to exceed that of any other productions. *Letter to the Lord High Treasurer. Swift.*

This, instead of studying the resemblance of words in a period that expresses a comparison, is going out of one's road to avoid it. Instead of productions, which resemble not ministers great nor small the proper word is *writers* or *authors*.

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as much liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they likewise receive praises which they do not deserve. *Spectator*.

\* And they had been led into this custom, that in the coldest places they used no garments save skins, which were so short that a great part of the body was exposed; and they bathed in the rivers.

Here the subject plainly demands uniformity in expression instead of variety; and therefore it is submitted, whether the period would not do better in the following manner:

If men of eminence be exposed to censure on the one hand, they are as much exposed to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches that are not due, they likewise receive praises that are not due.

I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with *other judgments*, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your *lordship*.<sup>\*</sup> [Better thus:] I cannot but fancy, however, that this imitation, which passes so currently with *others*, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your *lordship*.

A glutton or mere sensualist is as ridiculous as the other two characters.

*Shaftesbury*, Vol. I. p. 129.

They wisely prefer *the generous efforts of good-will and affection*, to the reluctant compliances of such as obey by force.

*Remarks on the History of England*, Letter 5. *Bolingbroke*.

Titus Livius, mentioning a demand made by the people of Enna of the keys from the Roman governor, makes him say.

Quas simul tradiderimus, Carthaginensium extemplo Enna erit, fœdusque hic trucidabimur, quam Murgantiæ præsidium interfectum est.† *L. 24. § 38.*

Quintus Curtius, speaking of Porus mounted on an elephant, and leading his army to battle:

Magnitudini Pori adjicere videbatur bellua qua vehebatur, tantum inter cæteras eminens, quanto aliis ipse præstabat.‡ *L. 8. cap. 14.*

It is still a greater deviation from congruity, to affect not only variety in the words, but also in the construction. Describing Thermopylæ, Titus Livius says,

Id jugum, sicut Apennini dorso Italia dividitur, ita mediam Græciam diremit.§ *L. 36. § 15.*

Speaking of Shakspeare:

There may remain a suspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the same manner as bodies appear more gigantic on account of their being disproportioned and misshapen. *History of G. Britain*, Vol. I. p. 138.

This is studying variety in a period where the beauty lies in uniformity. Better thus:

There may remain a suspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the same manner as we over-rate the greatness of bodies that are disproportioned and misshapen.

Next as to the length of the members that signify the resembling objects. To produce a resemblance between such members, they ought not only be constructed in the same manner, but as nearly as possible be equal in length. By neglecting this circumstance, the following example is defective in neatness:

As the performance of all other religious duties will not avail in the sight of

\* Letter concerning Enthusiasm. *Shaftesbury*.

† As soon as we shall have delivered them (the keys) Enna forthwith becomes Carthaginian, and in this we shall be more basely butchered than the Murgantian guard.

‡ The brute that carried Porus, seemed to add to his magnitude, towering as much over the other beasts, as he (Porus) towered above other men.

§ That ridge, as Italy is divided by the back of the Appenines, so it divides middle Greece.

God, *without charity*; so neither will the discharge of all other ministerial duties avail in the sight of men, *without a faithful discharge of this principal duty.*

*Dissertation upon Parties. Dedication.*

In the following passage are accumulated all the errors that a period expressing a resemblance can well admit.

Ministers are answerable for every thing done to the prejudice of the constitution, in the same proportion as the preservation of the constitution in its purity and vigor, or the perverting and weakening it, are of greater consequence to the nation, than any other instances of good or bad government.

*Dissertation upon Parties. Dedication.*

Next of a comparison where things are opposed to each other. And here it must be obvious, that if resemblance ought to be studied in the words which express two resembling objects, there is equal reason for studying opposition in the words which express contrasted objects. This rule will be best illustrated by examples of deviations from it:

A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy inflames his crimes.

*Spectator, No. 399.*

Here the opposition in the thought is neglected in the words, which at first view seem to import, that the friend and the enemy are employed in different matters, without any relation to each other, whether of resemblance or of opposition. And, therefore, the contrast or opposition will be better marked by expressing the thought as follows:

A friend exaggerates a man's virtues, an enemy his crimes.

The following are examples of the same kind.

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him. *Ibid. No. 73.*

Better:

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation; the fool when he gains that of others.

Sicut in frugibus pecudibusque, non tantum semina ad servandam indolem valent, quantum terræ proprietates cœlique, sub quo aluntur, mutat.\*

*Livy, lib. 38. Sect. 17.*

We proceed to a rule of a different kind. During the course of a period, the scene ought to be continued without variation: the changing from person to person, from subject to subject, or from person to subject, within the bounds of a single period, distracts the mind, and affords no time for a solid impression. I illustrate this rule by giving examples of deviations from it.

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloriâ; jacentque ea semper quæ apud quosque improbantur.†

*Cicero, Tuscul. quest. l. 1.*

Speaking of the distemper contracted by Alexander bathing in the river Cydnus, and of the cure offered by Philip the physician:

Inter hæc à Parmenione fidissimo purpuratorum, literas accipit, quibus ei denunciabat, ne salutem suam Philippo committeret.‡

*Quintus Curtius, l. 3. cap. 6.*

\* As in fruits and cattle the seed not only serves to preserve the breed, as much as the properties of soil and climate change, by which they are nourished.

† Honor nurses the arts—we are all ambitious of glorious studies—those are always disregarded which are condemned by every one.

‡ In the midst of these things, he receives lessons from Parmenio the most faithful of his courtiers, in which he warned him not to trust his health to Philip.

Hook, in his Roman history, speaking of Eumenes, who had been beat to the ground with a stone, says,

After a short time *he* came to himself; and the next day *they* put him on board his ship, *which* conveyed him first to Corinth, and thence to the island of Ægina.

I give another example of a period which is unpleasant, even by a very slight deviation from the rule.

That sort of instruction which is acquired by inculcating an important moral truth, &c.

This expression includes two persons, one acquiring and one inculcating; and the scene is changed without necessity. To avoid this blemish, the thought may be expressed thus:

That sort of instruction which is afforded by inculcating, &c.

The bad effect of such change of person is remarkable in the following passage:

The Britons, daily harassed by cruel inroads from the Picts, were forced to call in the Saxons for their defence, *who* consequently reduced the greatest part of the island to their own power, drove the Britons into the most remote and mountainous parts, and *the rest of the country*, in customs, religion, and language, became wholly Saxon. *Letter to the Lord High Treasurer. Swift.*

The following passage has a change from subject to person:

*This prostitution of praise* is not only a deceit upon the gross of mankind, who take their notion of characters from the learned; but also *the better sort* must by this means lose some part at least of that desire of fame which is the incentive to generous actions, when they find it promiscuously bestowed on the meritorious and undeserving. *Guardian, No. 4.*

Even so slight a change as to vary the construction in the same period, is unpleasant:

Annibal luce prima, Balearibus levique alia armatura præmissa, transgressus flumen, ut quosque traduxerat, ita in acie locabat; Gallos Hispanosque equites prope ripam lævo in cornu adversus Romanum equitatum; dextrum cornu Numidis equitibus datum.\* *Tib. Liv. l. 22. § 46.*

Speaking of Hannibal's elephants drove back by the enemy upon his own army:

Eo magis ruere in suos belluæ, tantoque majorem stragem edere quam inter hostes ediderant, quanto acrius pavor consternatam agit, quam insidentis magistri imperio regitur.† *Liv. l. 27. § 14.*

This passage is also faulty in a different respect, that there is no resemblance between the members of the sentence, though they express a simile.

The present head, which relates to the choice of materials, shall be closed with a rule concerning the use of copulatives. Longinus observes, that it animates a period to drop the copulatives; and he gives the following example from Xenophon:

Closing their shields together, they were push'd, they fought, they slew, they were slain. *Treatise of the Sublime, cap. 16.*

\* Annibal, early in the morning having sent over the slingers and other light troops, crossed the river to place in battalion those whom he had led over; the Gallic and Spanish horsemen near the bank in the left wing, opposite the Roman cavalry—the right wing was given to the Numidian horse.

† The more the brutes rushed upon their own men, the greater slaughter they made amongst them than amongst the enemies, by as much as their consternation was greater than the power of their riders to govern them.

The reason I take to be what follows. A continued sound, if not loud, tends to lay us asleep: an interrupted sound rouses and animates by its repeated impulses. Thus feet composed of syllables, being pronounced with a sensible interval between each, make more lively impressions than can be made by a continued sound. A period of which the members are connected by copulatives, produces an effect upon the mind approaching to that of a continued sound; and, therefore, the suppressing of copulatives must animate a description. It produces a different effect akin to that mentioned: the members of a period connected by proper copulatives, glide smoothly and gently along; and are a proof of sedateness and leisure in the speaker: on the other hand, one in the hurry of passion, neglecting copulatives and other particles, expresses the principal image only; and for that reason, hurry or quick action is best expressed without copulatives:

Veni, vidi, vici.\*

----- Ite:

Ferte citi flammæ, date vela, impellite remos.

Haste—haul my galleys out! pursue the foe!

Bring flaming brands! set sail, and swiftly row! *Æneid. IV. 593.*

Quis globus, O civis, caligine volvitur atra?

Ferte citi ferrum, date tela, scandite muros.

Hostis adest, eja.

What rolling clouds, my friends, approach the wall?

Arm! arm! and man the works—prepare your spears

And pointed darts, the Latian host appears! *Æneid. IX. 37.*

In this view Longinus † justly compares copulatives in a period to strait tying, which in a race obstructs the freedom of motion.

It follows, that a plurality of copulatives in the same period ought to be avoided: for if the laying aside of copulatives give force and liveliness, a redundancy of them must render the period languid. I appeal to the following instance, though there are but two copulatives:

Upon looking over the letters of my female correspondents, I find several from women complaining of jealous husbands; and at the same time protesting their own innocence, and desiring my advice upon this occasion. *Spectator, No. 170.*

I except the case where the words are intended to express the coldness of the speaker; for there the redundancy of copulatives is a beauty.

Dining one day at an alderman's in the city, Peter observed him expatiating, after the manner of his brethren, in the praises of his surloin of beef. "Beef," said the sage magistrate, "is the king of meat: Beef comprehends in it the quintessence of partridge, and quail, and venison, and pheasant, and plum-pudding and custard."

*Tale of a Tub 4*

And the author shows great delicacy of taste by varying the expression in the mouth of Peter, who is represented more animated:

"Bread," says he, "dear brothers, is the staff of life; in which bread is contained, inclusive, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridges, plum-pudding, and custard."

\* I came—saw—conquered!

† Treatise of the Sublime, cap. 16.



Another case must also be excepted: copulatives have a good effect where the intention is to give an impression of a great multitude consisting of many divisions; for example: "The army was composed of Grecians, and Carians, and Lycians, and Pamphylians, and Phrygians." The reason is, that a leisurely survey, which is expressed by the copulatives, makes the parts appear more numerous than they would do by a hasty survey: in the latter case the army appears in one group; in the former, we take as it were an accurate survey of each nation and of each division.\*

We proceed to the second kind of beauty; which consists in a due arrangement of the words or materials. This branch of the subject is no less nice than extensive; and I despair of setting it in a clear light, except to those who are well acquainted with the general principles that govern the structure or composition of language.

In a thought, generally speaking, there is, at least, one capital object considered as acting or as suffering. This object is expressed by a substantive noun; its action is expressed by an active verb; and the thing affected by the action is expressed by another substantive noun: its suffering or passive state is expressed by a passive verb; and the thing that acts upon it, by a substantive noun. Beside these, which are the capital parts of a sentence or period, there are, generally, under-parts; each of the substantives, as well as the verb, may be qualified: time, place, purpose, motive, means, instrument, and a thousand other circumstances, may be necessary to complete the thought. And in what manner these several parts are connected in the expression, will appear from what follows.

In a complete thought or mental proposition, all the members and parts are mutually related, some slightly, some intimately. To put such a thought in words, it is not sufficient that the component ideas be clearly expressed; it is also necessary, that all the relations contained in the thought be expressed according to their different degrees of intimacy. To annex a certain meaning to a certain sound or word, requires no art: the great nicety in all languages is, to express the various relations that connect the parts of the thought. Could we suppose this branch of language to be still a secret, it would puzzle, I am apt to think, the most acute grammarian, to invent an expeditious method: and yet, by the guidance merely of nature, the rude and illiterate have been led to a method so perfect, as to appear not susceptible of any improvement; and the next step in our progress shall be to explain that method.

Words that import a relation, must be distinguished from such as do not. Substantives commonly imply no relation; such as *animal*, *man*, *tree*, *river*. Adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, imply a relation; the adjective *good* must relate to some being possessed of that quality; the verb *write* is applied to some person who writes; and the adverbs *moderately*, *diligently*, have plainly a reference to some action which they modify. When a relative word is introduced, it must be signified by the expression to what word it relates, without which the sense is not complete. For answering that purpose, I

\* See Demetrius Phalereus of Elocution, sect. 63.

observe in Greek and Latin two different methods. Adjectives are declined as well as substantives; and declension serves to ascertain their connection: If the word that expresses the subject be, for example, in the nominative case, so also must the word be that expresses its quality; example, *vir bonus*. Again, verbs are related, on the one hand, to the agent, and, on the other, to the subject upon which the action is exerted: and a contrivance similar to that now mentioned, serves to express the double relation: the nominative case is appropriated to the agent, the accusative to the passive subject; and the verb is put in the first, second, or third person, to intimate its connection with the word that signifies the agent: examples, *Ego amo Tulliam; tu amas Semproniam; Brutus amat Portiam*.<sup>\*</sup> The other method is by juxtaposition, which is necessary with respect to such words only as are not declined; adverbs, for example, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. In the English language there are few declensions; and therefore juxtaposition is our chief resource: adjectives accompany their substantives; † an adverb accompanies the word it qualifies; and the verb occupies the middle place between the active and passive subjects, to which it relates.

It must be obvious, that those terms which have nothing relative in their signification, cannot be connected in so easy a manner. When two substantives happen to be connected, as cause and effect, as principal and accessory, or in any other manner, such connection cannot be expressed by contiguity solely; for words must often, in a period, be placed together which are not thus related: the relation between substantives, therefore, cannot otherwise be expressed than by particles denoting the relation. Latin indeed and Greek, by their declensions, go a certain length to express such relations, without the aid of particles. The relation of property for example, between Cæsar and his horse, is expressed by putting the latter in the nominative case, the former in the genitive; *equus Cæsaris*: the same is also expressed in English without the aid of a particle, *Cæsar's horse*. But in other instances, declensions not being used in the English language, relations of this kind are commonly expressed by prepositions. Examples: That wine came *from* Cyprus. He is going *to* Paris. The sun is *below* the horizon.

This form of connecting by prepositions, is not confined to substantives. Qualities, attributes, manner of existing or acting, and all other circumstances, may, in the same manner, be connected with the substances to which they relate. This is done<sup>\*</sup> artificially by converting the circumstance into a substantive; in which condition it is qualified to be connected with the principal subject by a preposition, in the manner above described. For example, the adjective

<sup>\*</sup> I love Tullia—thou lovest Sempronia—Brutus loves Portia.

† Taking advantage of a declension to separate an adjective from its substantive, as is commonly practised in Latin, though it detract not from perspicuity, is certainly less neat than the English method of juxtaposition. Contiguity is more expressive of an intimate relation, than resemblance merely of the final syllables. Latin indeed has evidently the advantage when the adjective and substantive happen to be connected by contiguity, as well as by resemblance of the final syllables.

*wise* being converted into the substantive *wisdom*, gives opportunity for the expression "a man of wisdom," instead of the more simple expression, *a wise man*: this variety in the expression enriches language. I observe, beside, that the using of a preposition in this case, is not always a matter of choice: it is indispensable with respect to every circumstance that cannot be expressed by a single adjective or adverb.

To pave the way for the rules of arrangement, one other preliminary is necessary; which is, to explain the difference between a natural style, and that where transposition or inversion prevails. There are, it is true, no precise boundaries between them, for they run into each other like the shades of different colors. No person, however, is at a loss to distinguish them in their extremes: and it is necessary to make the distinction: because though some of the rules I shall have occasion to mention are common to both, yet each has rules peculiar to itself. In a natural style, relative words are by juxtaposition connected with those to which they relate, going before or after, according to the peculiar genius of the language. Again, a circumstance connected by a preposition, follows naturally the word with which it is connected. But this arrangement may be varied, when a different order is more beautiful; a circumstance may be placed before the word with which it is connected by a preposition; and may be interjected even between a relative word and that to which it relates. When such liberties are frequently taken, the style becomes inverted or transposed.

But as the liberty of inversion is a capital point in the present subject, it will be necessary to examine it more narrowly, and in particular to trace the several degrees in which an inverted style recedes more and more from that which is natural. And first, as to the placing of a circumstance before the word with which it is connected, I observe, that it is the easiest of all inversion, even so easy as to be consistent with a style that is properly termed natural; witness the following examples.

In the sincerity of my heart, I profess, &c.

By our own ill management, we are brought to so low an ebb of wealth and credit, that, &c.

On Thursday morning there was little or nothing transacted in Change-alley.

At St. Bride's church in Fleet-street, Mr. Woolston, (who writ against the miracles of our Savior,) in the utmost terrors of conscience, made a public recantation.

The interjecting of a circumstance between a relative word, and that to which it relates, is more properly termed inversion; because, by a disjunction of words intimately connected, it recedes farther from a natural style. But this license has degrees; for the disjunction is more violent in some instances than in others. And to give a just notion of the difference, there is a necessity to enter a little more into an abstract subject, than would otherwise be my inclination.

In nature, though a subject cannot exist without its qualities, nor

a quality without a subject; yet in our conception of these, a material difference may be remarked. I cannot conceive a quality but as belonging to some subject: it makes, indeed, a part of the idea which is formed of the subject. But the opposite holds not; for though I cannot form a conception of a subject void of all qualities, a partial conception may be formed of it, abstracting from any particular quality: I can, for example, form the idea of a fine Arabian horse without regard to his color, or of a white horse without regard to his size. Such partial conception of a subject, is still more easy with respect to action or motion; which is an occasional attribute only, and has not the same permanency with color or figure: I cannot form an idea of motion independent of a body; but there is nothing more easy than to form an idea of a body at rest. Hence it appears, that the degree of inversion depends greatly on the order in which the related words are placed: when a substantive occupies the first place, the idea it suggests must subsist in the mind at least for a moment, independent of the relative words afterward introduced; and that moment may without difficulty be prolonged by interjecting a circumstance between the substantive and its connections. This liberty, therefore, however frequent, will scarcely alone be sufficient to denominate a style inverted. The case is very different, where the word that occupies the first place denotes a quality or an action; for as these cannot be conceived without a subject, they cannot, without greater violence, be separated from the subject that follows; and for that reason, every such separation, by means of an interjected circumstance, belongs to an inverted style.

To illustrate this doctrine, examples are necessary; and I shall begin with those where the word first introduced does not imply a relation

————— Nor Eve to iterate  
Her former trespass fear'd.

————— Hunger and thirst at once,  
Powerful persuaders, quicken'd at the scent  
Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen.

Moon that now meet'st the orient sun, now flit'st  
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies,  
And ye five other wand'ring fires that move  
In mystic dance not without song, resound  
His praise.

In the following examples, where the word first introduced imports a relation, the disjunction will be found more violent.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our wo,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,  
Sing heav'nly muse. •

————— Upon the firm opacous globe  
Of this round world, whose first convex divides  
The luminous inferior orbs inclos'd  
From chaos and th' inroad of darkness old,  
Satan alighted walks.

————— On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
Th' infernal doors.

————— Wherein remain'd,  
For what could else? to our almighty foe  
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout.

————— Forth rush'd, with whirlwind sound,  
The chariot of paternal Deity.

Language would have no great power, were it confined to the natural order of ideas. I shall soon have opportunity to make it evident, that by inversion a thousand beauties may be compassed, which must be relinquished in a natural arrangement. In the mean time, it ought not to escape observation, that the mind of man is happily so constituted as to relish inversion, though in one respect unnatural; and to relish it so much, as in many cases to admit a separation between words the most intimately connected. It can scarcely be said that inversion has any limits; though I may venture to pronounce, that the disjunction of articles, conjunctions, or prepositions, from the words to which they belong, has very seldom a good effect. The following example with relation to a preposition, is, perhaps, as tolerable as any of the kind:

He would neither separate *from*, nor act against *them*.

I give notice to the reader, that I am now ready to enter on the rules of arrangement; beginning with a natural style, and proceeding, gradually, to what is the most inverted. And in the arrangement of a period, as well as in a right choice of words, the first and great object being perspicuity, the rule above laid down, that perspicuity ought not to be sacrificed to any other beauty, holds equally in both. Ambiguities occasioned by a wrong arrangement are of two sorts; one where the arrangement leads to a wrong sense, and one where the sense is left doubtful. The first, being the more culpable, shall take the lead, beginning with examples of words put in a wrong place.

How much the imagination of such a presence must exalt a genius, we may observe *merely* from the influence which an ordinary presence has over men.

*Characteristics*, Vol. i. p. 7.

This arrangement leads to a wrong sense: the adverb *merely* seems by its position to affect the preceding word; whereas it is intended to affect the following words, *an ordinary presence*; and therefore the arrangement ought to be thus:

How much the imagination of such a presence must exalt a genius, we may observe from the influence which an ordinary presence *merely* has over men. [Or, better,]—which even an ordinary presence has over men.

The time of the election of a poet-laureat being now at hand, it may be proper to give some account of the rites and ceremonies anciently used at that solemnity, and *only* discontinued through the neglect and degeneracy of later times.

*Guardian*.

The term *only* is intended to qualify the noun *degeneracy*, and not the participle *discontinued*; and therefore the arrangement ought to be as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ and discontinued through the neglect and degeneracy only of later times.

Sixtus the Fourth was, if I mistake not, a great collector of books at least.

*Letters on History, Vol. I. Let. 6. Belingbroke*

The expression *aere* leads evidently to a wrong sense; the adverb *at least*, ought not to be connected with the substantive *books*, but with *collector*, thus:

Sixtus the Fourth was a great collector at least of books.

Speaking of Lewis XIV.

If he was not the greatest king, he was the best actor of majesty at least, that ever filled a throne.

*Ibid. Letter 7.*

Better thus:

If he was not the greatest king, he was at least the best actor of majesty, &c.

This arrangement removes the wrong sense occasioned by the juxtaposition of *majesty* and *at least*.

The following examples are of a wrong arrangement of members:

I have confined myself to those methods for the advancement of piety, which are in the power of a prince limited like ours by a strict execution of the laws.

*A Project for the Advancement of Religion. Swift.*

The structure of this period leads to a meaning which is not the author's, viz. power limited by a strict execution of the laws. That wrong sense is removed by the following arrangement:

I have confined myself to those methods for the advancement of piety, which, by a strict execution of the laws, are in the power of a prince limited like ours.

This morning, when one of Lady Lizard's daughters was looking over some hoods and ribands brought by her tirewoman, with great care and diligence, I employed no less in examining the box which contained them.

*Guardian, No. 4.*

The wrong sense occasioned by this arrangement, may be easily prevented by varying it thus:

This morning when, with great care and diligence, one of Lady Lizard's daughters was looking over some hoods and ribands, &c.

A great stone that I happened to find after a long search by the sea-shore, served me for an anchor.

*Gulliver's Travels, Part I. Chap. 8.*

One would think that the search was confined to the sea-shore; but as the meaning is, that the great stone was found by the sea-shore, the period ought to be arranged thus:

A great stone, that, after a long search, I happened to find by the sea-shore, served me for an anchor.

Next of a wrong arrangement where the sense is left doubtful; beginning, as in the former sort, with examples of wrong arrangement of words in a member.

These forms of conversation *by degrees* multiplied and grew troublesome.

*Spectator, No. 119.*

Here it is left doubtful whether the modification *by degrees* relates to the preceding member or to what follows: it should be,

These forms of conversation multiplied by degrees.

Nor does this false modesty expose us *only* to such actions as are indiscreet, but very often to such as are highly criminal.

*Spectator, No. 458.*

The ambiguity is removed by the following arrangement:

Nor does this false modesty expose us to such actions only as are indiscreet, &c.

The empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted *only* by a channel of 800 yards wide.

*Gulliver's Travels*, Part I. Chap. 5.

The ambiguity may be removed thus:

———— from whence it is parted by a channel of 800 yards wide only.

In the following examples the sense is left doubtful by wrong arrangement of members.

The minister who grows less by his elevation, *like a little statue placed on a mighty pedestal*, will always have his jealousy strong about him.

*Dissertation upon Parties*. Dedication. *Beltingbrooke*.

Here, as far as can be gathered from the arrangement, it is doubtful, whether the object introduced by way of simile, relate to what goes before or to what follows: the ambiguity is removed by the following arrangement:

The minister, who, like a little statue placed on a mighty pedestal, grows less by his elevation, will always, &c.

Since this is too much to ask of freemen, nay of slaves, *if his expectation be not answered*, shall he form a lasting division upon such transient motives? *Ibid*.

Better thus:

Since this is too much to ask of freemen, nay of slaves, shall he, if his expectations be not answered, form, &c.

Speaking of the superstitious practice of locking up the room where a person of distinction dies:

The knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, *upon the death of his mother*, ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and exorcised by his chaplain.

*Spectator*, No. 110.

Better thus:

The knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, ordered, upon the death of his mother, all the apartments to be flung open.

Speaking of some indecencies in conversation:

As it is impossible for such an irrational way of conversation to last long among a people that make any profession of religion, or show of modesty, *if the country gentlemen get into it*, they will certainly be left in the lurch.

*Spectator*, No. 119.

The ambiguity vanishes in the following arrangement:

———— the country gentlemen, if they get into it, will certainly be left in the lurch.

Speaking of a discovery in natural philosophy, that color is not a quality of matter:

As this is a truth which has been proved incontestably by many modern philosophers, and is indeed one of the finest speculations in that science, *if the English reader would see the notion explained at large*, he may find it in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr. Locke's Essay on Human Understanding.

*Spectator*, No. 413.

Better thus:

As this is a truth, &c. the English reader, if he would see the notion explained at large, may find it, &c.



A woman seldom asks advice before she has bought her wedding-clothes. When she has made her own choice, *for form's sake* she sends a *conge d'elire* to her friends.

*Ibid.* No. 475.

Better thus :

—————she sends, for form's sake, a *conge d'elire* to her friends.

And since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, *where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it*, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage.

*Gulliver's Travels*, Part I. Chap. 6.

Better thus :

And since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, the honest dealer, where fraud is permitted or connived at, or hath no law to punish it, is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage.

From these examples, the following observation will occur, that a circumstance ought never to be placed between two capital members of a period; for by such situation it must always be doubtful, as far as we gather from the arrangement, to which of the two members it belongs: where it is interjected, as it ought to be, between parts of the member to which it belongs, the ambiguity is removed, and the capital members are kept distinct, which is a great beauty in composition. In general, to preserve members distinct that signify things distinguished in the thought, the best method is, to place first in the consequent member, some word that cannot connect with what precedes it.

If it shall be thought, that the objections here are too scrupulous, and that the defect of perspicuity is easily supplied by accurate punctuation; the answer is, that punctuation may remove an ambiguity, but will never produce that peculiar beauty which is perceived when the sense comes out clearly and distinctly by means of a happy arrangement. Such influence has this beauty, that by a natural transition of perception it is communicated to the very sound of the words, so as in appearance to improve the music of the period. But as this curious subject comes in more properly afterward, it is sufficient at present to appeal to experience, that a period so arranged as to bring out the sense clear, seems always more musical than where the sense is left in any degree doubtful.

A rule deservedly occupying the second place, is, that words expressing things connected in the thought, ought to be placed as near together as possible. This rule is derived immediately from human nature, prone in every instance to place together things in any manner connected: \* where things are arranged according to their connections, we have a sense of order; otherwise we have a sense of disorder, as of things placed by chance: and we naturally place words in the same order in which we would place the things they signify. The bad effect of a violent separation of words or members thus intimately connected, will appear from the following examples.

For the English are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, to many wild notions and visions, to which others are not so liable.

*Spectator*, No. 419,

\* See Chap. I.

Here the verb or assertion is, by a pretty long circumstance, violently separated from the subject to which it refers: this makes a harsh arrangement; the less excusable as the fault is easily prevented by placing the circumstance before the verb, after the following manner:

For the English are naturally fanciful, and, by that gloominess and melancholy of temper which is so frequent in our nation, are often disposed to many wild notions, &c.

For as no mortal author, in the ordinary fate and vicissitude of things, knows to what use his works may, some time or other be applied, &c.

*Spectator*, No. 85.

Better thus:

For as, in the ordinary fate and vicissitude of things, no mortal author knows to what use, some time or other, his works may be applied, &c.

From whence we may date likewise the rivalship of the house of France, for we may reckon that of Valois and that of Bourbon as one upon this occasion, and the house of Austria, that continues at this day, and has oft cost so much blood and so much treasure in the course of it.

*Letters on History*, Vol. I. Let. 6. *Bolingbroke*.

It cannot be impertinent or ridiculous therefore in such a country, whatever it might be in the Abbot of St. Real's, which was Savoy I think; or in Peru, under the Incas, where Garsilasso de la Vega says it was lawful for none but the nobility to study—for men of all degrees to instruct themselves, in those affairs wherein they may be actors, or judges of those that act, or controllers of those that judge.

*Letters on History*, Vol. I. Let. 5. *Bolingbroke*.

If Scipio, who was naturally given to women, for which anecdote we have, if I mistake not, the authority of Polybius, as well as some verses of Nevius, preserved by Aulus Gellius, had been educated by Olympias at the court of Philip, it is improbable that he would have restored the beautiful Spaniard. *Ibid.* Let. 3.

If any one have a curiosity for more specimens of this kind, they will be found, without number, in the works of the same author.

A pronoun, which saves the naming of a person or thing a second time, ought to be placed as near as possible to the name of that person or thing. This is a branch of the foregoing rule; and with the reason there given another concurs, viz. that if other ideas intervene, it is difficult to recall the person or thing by reference:

If I had leave to print the Latin letters transmitted to me from foreign parts, they would fill a volume, and be a full defence against all that Mr. Partridge, or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition, will be ever able to object; *who*, by the way, are the only enemies my predictions have ever met with at home or abroad.

Better thus:

\_\_\_\_\_ and be a full defence against all that can be objected by Mr. Partridge, or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition; *who*, by the way, are, &c.

There being a round million of creatures in human figure, throughout this kingdom, *whose* whole subsistence, &c. *A Modest Proposal*, &c. *Swift*.

Better:

There being throughout this kingdom, a round million of creatures in human figure, *whose* whole subsistence, &c.

Tom is a lively impudent clown, and has wit enough to have made him a pleasant companion, had *it* been polished and rectified by good manners.

*Guardian*, No. 162.

It is the custom of the Mahometans, if they see any printed or written paper upon the ground, to take it up, and lay it aside carefully, as not knowing but it may contain some piece of their Alcoran.

*Spectator*, No. 95.

The arrangement here leads to a wrong sense, as if the ground were taken up, not the paper,—Better thus :

It is the custom of the Mahometans, if they see upon the ground any printed or written paper, to take it up, &c.

The following rule depends on the communication of emotions to related objects ; a principle in human nature that has an extensive operation : and we find this operation, even where the objects are not otherwise related than by juxtaposition of the words that express them. Hence, to elevate or depress an object, one method is, to join it in the expression with another that is naturally high or low : witness the following speech of Eumenes to the Roman Senate.

*Causam veniendi sibi Romanam fuisse, præter cupiditatem visendi deos hominesque, quorum beneficio in ea fortuna esset, supra quam ne optare quidem auderet, etiam ut coram moneret senatum ut Persei conatus obviam iret.\**

*Livy, l. 42. cap. 11.*

To join the Romans with the gods in the same enunciation, is an artful stroke of flattery, because it tacitly puts them on a level. On the other hand, the degrading or vilifying of an object, is done successfully by ranking it with one that is really low :

I hope to have this entertainment in a readiness for the next winter ; and doubt not but it will please more than the opera or puppet-show. *Spectator, No. 28.*

Manifold have been the judgments which Heaven from time to time, for the chastisement of a sinful people, has inflicted upon whole nations. For when the degeneracy becomes common, 'tis but just the punishment should be general. Of this kind, in our own unfortunate country, was that destructive pestilence, whose mortality was so fatal as to sweep away, if Sir William Petty may be believed, five millions of Christian souls, besides women and Jews.

*God's Revenge against Punning. Arbuthnot.*

Such also was that dreadful conflagration ensuing in this famous metropolis of London, which consumed, according to the computation of Sir Samuel Moreland, 100,000 houses, not to mention churches and stables. *Ibid.*

But on condition it might pass into a law, I would gladly exempt both lawyers of all ages, subaltern and field officers, young heirs, dancing-masters, pick-pockets, and players.

*An infallible Scheme to pay the Public Debt. Swift.*

Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,  
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all.

*Rape of the Lock.*

Circumstances in a period resemble small stones in a building, employed to fill up vacuities among those of a larger size. In the arrangement of a period, such under-parts crowded together make a poor figure ; and never are graceful but when interspersed among the capital parts. I illustrate this rule by the following example.

It is likewise urged, that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above 10,000 parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my Lords the Bishops, would suffice to maintain, &c. *Argument against abolishing Christianity. Swift.*

Here two circumstances, viz. *by computation, and in this kingdom,* are crowded together unnecessarily ; they make a better appearance separated in the following manner :

\* His cause for coming to Rome, in addition to his desire of seeing gods and men, by whose kindness he had such good fortune, and more than which he dared not wish for, was that he might openly assure the senate that he was opposed to Perseus.

It is likewise urged, that in this kingdom there are, by computation, above 10,000 parsons, &c.

If there be room for a choice, the sooner a circumstance is introduced, the better; because circumstances are proper for that coolness of mind, with which we begin a period as well as a volume: in the progress, the mind warms, and has a greater relish for matters of importance. When a circumstance is placed at the beginning of the period, or near the beginning, the transition from it to the principal subject is agreeable: it is like ascending, or going upward. On the other hand, to place it late in the period has a bad effect: for after being engaged in the principal subject, one is with reluctance brought down to give attention to a circumstance. Hence evidently the preference of the following arrangement:

Whether in any country a choice altogether unexceptionable has been made, seems doubtful.

Before this other,

Whether a choice altogether unexceptionable has in any country been made, &c. For this reason the following period is exceptionable in point of arrangement.

I have considered formerly, with a good deal of attention, the subject upon which you command me to communicate my thoughts to you.

*Bolingbroke of the Study of History, Letter 1.*

which, with a slight alteration, may be improved thus:

I have formerly, with a good deal of attention, considered the subject, &c.

Swift, speaking of a virtuous and learned education:

And although they may be, and too often are drawn, by the temptations of youth, and the opportunities of a large fortune, into some irregularities, *when they come forward into the great world*; it is ever with reluctance and compunction of mind, because their bias to virtue still continues. *The Intelligencer, No. 9.*

Better:

And although, *when they come forward into the great world*, they may be, and too often, &c.

The bad effect of placing a circumstance last or late in a period, will appear from the following examples.

Let us endeavor to establish to ourselves an interest in him who holds the reins of the whole creation in his hand.

*Spectator, No. 12.*

Better thus:

Let us endeavor to establish to ourselves an interest in him, who, in his hand, holds the reins of the whole creation.

Virgil, who has cast the whole system of Platonic philosophy, so far as it relates to the soul of man, into beautiful allegories, *in the sixth book of his Æneid*, gives us the punishment, &c.

*Spectator, No. 90.*

Better thus:

Virgil, who in the sixth book of his *Æneid*, has cast, &c.

And Philip the Fourth was obliged at last to conclude a peace on terms repugnant to his inclination, to that of his people, to the interest of Spain, and to that of all Europe, in the Pyrenean treaty.

*Letters on History, Vol. I. Let. 6. Bolingbroke.*

Better thus:

And at last, in the Pyrenean treaty, Philip the Fourth was obliged to conclude a peace, &c.

In arranging a period, it is of importance to determine in what part of it a word makes the greatest figure; whether at the beginning, during the course, or at the close. Breaking silence rouses the attention, and prepares for a deep impression at the beginning: the beginning, however, must yield to the close; which being succeeded by a pause, affords time for a word to make its deepest impression.\* Hence the following rule, that to give the utmost force to a period, it ought, if possible, to be closed with that word which makes the greatest figure. The opportunity of a pause should not be thrown away upon accessories, but reserved for the principal object, in order that it may make a full impression: which is an additional reason against closing a period with a circumstance. There are, however, periods that admit not such a structure; and in that case, the capital word ought, if possible, to be placed in the front, which next to the close is the most advantageous for making an impression. Hence, in directing our discourse to a man of figure, we ought to begin with his name; and one will be sensible of a degradation, when this rule is neglected, as it frequently is for the sake of verse. I give the following examples.

Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus,  
Non eget Mauri jaculis, neque arcu,  
Nec venenatis gravidâ sagittis,  
Fusce, pharetrâ.

*Horat. Carm. l. 1. ode 22.*

One sound and pure of wicked arts  
Leaves to the blocks their spear and bow,  
Nor need the deadly tinctured darts  
Within his quiver stow.

*Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte.*

In these examples, the name of the person addressed to makes a mean figure, being like a circumstance slipt into a corner. That this criticism is well founded, we need no other proof than Addison's translation of the last example:

O Abner! I fear my God, and I fear none but him.

*Guardian, No. 117.*

O father, what intends thy hand, she cry'd,  
Against thy only son? What fury, O son,  
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart  
Against thy father's head?

*Paradise Lost, B. 2. l. 727.*

Every one must be sensible of a dignity in the invocation at the beginning, which is not attained by that in the middle. I mean not, however, to censure this passage: on the contrary, it appears beautiful, by distinguishing the respect that is due to a father from that which is due to a son.

The substance of what is said in this and the foregoing section,

\* To give force or elevation to a period, it ought to begin and end with a long syllable. For a long syllable makes naturally the strongest impression: and of all the syllables in a period, we are chiefly moved with the first and last.

*Demetrius Phalereus of Elocution, Sect. 39.*

upon the method of arranging words in a period, so as to make the deepest impression with respect to sound as well as signification, is comprehended in the following observation: That order of words in a period will always be the most agreeable, where, without obscuring the sense, the most important images, the most sonorous words, and the longest members, bring up the rear.

Hitherto of arranging single words, single members, and single circumstances. But the enumeration of many particulars in the same period is often necessary; and the question is, In what order they should be placed? It does not seem easy, at first view, to bring a subject apparently so loose under any general rule: but luckily, reflecting upon what is said in the first chapter about order, we find rules laid down to our hand, which leave us no task but that of applying them to the present question. And, first, with respect to the enumerating particulars of equal rank, it is laid down in the place quoted, that as there is no cause for preferring any one before the rest, it is indifferent to the mind in what order they be viewed. And it is only necessary to be added here, that for the same reason, it is indifferent in what order they be named. 2dly. If a number of objects of the same kind, differing only in size, are to be ranged along a straight line, the most agreeable order to the eye is that of an increasing series. In surveying a number of such objects, beginning at the least, and proceeding to greater and greater, the mind swells gradually with the successive objects, and in its progress has a very sensible pleasure. Precisely for the same reason, words expressive of such objects ought to be placed in the same order. The beauty of this figure, which may be termed a *climax in sense*, has escaped Lord Bolingbroke in the first member of the following period.

Let but one great, brave, disinterested, active man arise, and he will be received, followed, and almost adored.

The following arrangement has sensibly a better effect

Let but one brave, great, active, disinterested man arise, &c.

Whether the same rule ought to be followed in enumerating men of different ranks, seems doubtful: on the one hand, a number of persons presented to the eye in form of an increasing series is undoubtedly the most agreeable order: on the other hand, in every list of names, we set the person of the greatest dignity at the top, and descend gradually through his inferiors. Where the purpose is to honour the persons named according to their rank, the latter order ought to be followed; but every one who regards himself only, or his reader, will choose the former order. 3dly, As the sense or order directs the eye to descend from the principal to its greatest accessory, and from the whole to its greatest part, and in the same order through all the parts and accessories till we arrive at the minutest; the same order ought to be followed in the enumeration of such particulars. I shall give one familiar example. Talking of the parts of a column, the base, the shaft, the capital, these are capable of six different arrangements, and the question is, Which is

the best? When we have in view the erecting of a column, we are naturally led to express the parts in the order above mentioned; which at the same time is agreeable by ascending. But considering the column as it stands, without reference to its erection, the sense of order, as observed above, requires the chief part to be named first: for that reason we begin with the shaft; and the base comes next in order, that we may ascend from it to the capital. Lastly, In tracing the particulars of any natural operation, order requires that we follow the course of nature: historical facts are related in the order of time: we begin at the founder of a family, and proceed from him to his descendants: but in describing a lofty oak, we begin with the trunk, and ascend to the branches.

When force and liveliness of expression are demanded, the rule is, to suspend the thought as long as possible, and to bring it out full and entire at the close: which cannot be done but by inverting the natural arrangement. By introducing a word or member before its time, curiosity is raised about what is to follow; and it is agreeable to have our curiosity gratified at the close of the period: the pleasure we feel resembles that of seeing a stroke exerted upon a body by the whole collected force of the agent. On the other hand, where a period is so constructed as to admit more than one complete close in the sense, the curiosity of the reader is exhausted at the first close, and what follows appears languid or superfluous: his disappointment contributes also to that appearance, when he finds, contrary to expectation, that the period is not yet finished. Cicero, and after him Quintilian, recommend the verb to the last place. This method evidently tends to suspend the sense till the close of the period; for without the verb the sense cannot be complete: and when the verb happens to be the capital word, which it frequently is, it ought at any rate to be the last, according to another rule, above laid down. I proceed as usual to illustrate this rule by examples. The following period is placed in its natural order.

Were instruction an essential circumstance in epic poetry, I doubt whether a single instance could be given of this species of composition, in any language.

The period thus arranged admits a full close upon the word *composition*; after which it goes on languidly, and closes without force. This blemish will be avoided by the following arrangement:

Were instruction an essential circumstance in epic poetry, I doubt whether, in any language, a single instance could be given of this species of composition.

Some of our most eminent divines have made use of this Platonic notion, as far as it regards the subsistence of our passions after death, with great beauty and strength of reason.

*Spectator*, No. 90.

Better thus:

Some of our most eminent divines have, with great beauty and strength of reason, made use of this Platonic notion, &c.

Men of the best sense have been touched, more or less, with these groundless horrors and presages of futurity, upon surveying the most indifferent works of nature.

*Spectator*, No. 505.

Better,

Upon surveying the most indifferent works of nature. men of the best sense, &c.



She soon informed him of the place he was in, which, notwithstanding all its horrors, appeared to him more sweet than the bower of Mahomet, in the company of his Balsora. *Guardian*, No. 167.

Better,

She soon, &c. appeared to him, in the company of his Balsora, more sweet, &c.

The Emperor was so intent on the establishment of his absolute power in Hungary, that he exposed the empire doubly to desolation and ruin for the sake of it. *Letters on History*, Vol. I. Let. 7. *Bolingbroke*.

Better

——— that for the sake of it he exposed the empire doubly to desolation and ruin.

None of the rules for the composition of periods are more liable to be abused, than those last mentioned; witness many Latin writers, among the moderns especially, whose style, by inversions too violent, is rendered harsh and obscure. Suspension of the thought till the close of the period, ought never to be preferred before perspicuity. Neither ought such suspension to be attempted in a long period; because in that case the mind is bewildered amidst a profusion of words: a traveller, while he is puzzled about the road, relishes not the finest prospect:

All the rich presents which Astyages had given him at parting, keeping only some Median horses, in order to propagate the breed of them in Persia, he distributed among his friends whom he left at the court of Ecbatana.

*Travels of Cyrus*, Book I.

The foregoing rules concern the arrangement of a single period: I add one rule more concerning the distribution of a discourse into different periods. A short period is lively and familiar: a long period, requiring more attention, makes an impression grave and solemn.\* In general, a writer ought to study a mixture of long and short periods, which prevent an irksome uniformity, and entertain the mind with variety of impressions. In particular, long periods ought to be avoided till the reader's attention be thoroughly engaged; and therefore a discourse, especially of the familiar kind, ought never to be introduced with a long period. For that reason, the commencement of a letter to a very young lady on her marriage is faulty:

Madam, The hurry and impertinence of receiving and paying visits on account of your marriage, being now over, you are beginning to enter into a course of life, where you will want much advice to divert you from falling into many errors, fopperies, and follies, to which your sex is subject. *Swift*.

See another example still more faulty, in the commencement of Cicero's oration, *Pro Archia Poeta*.

Before proceeding farther, it may be proper to review the rules laid down in this and the preceding section, in order to make some general observations. That order of the words and members of a period is justly termed natural, which corresponds to the natural order of the ideas that compose the thought. The tendency of many

\* Demetrius Phalereus (of Elocution, sect. 44.) observes, that long members in a period make an impression of gravity and importance. The same observation is applicable to periods.

of the foregoing rules is to substitute an artificial arrangement, in order to catch some beauty either of sound or meaning for which there is no place in the natural order. But seldom it happens, that in the same period there is place for a plurality of these rules: if one beauty can be retained, another must be relinquished; and the only question is, Which ought to be preferred? This question cannot be resolved by any general rule: if the natural order be not relished, a few trials will discover that artificial order which has the best effect; and this exercise, supported by a good taste, will in time make the choice easy. All that can be said in general is, that in making a choice, sound ought to yield to signification.

The transposing words and members out of their natural order, so remarkable in the learned languages, has been the subject of much speculation. It is agreed on all hands, that such transposition or inversion bestows upon a period a very sensible degree of force and elevation; and yet writers seem to be at a loss how to account for this effect. Cerceau\* ascribes so much power to inversion, as to make it the characteristic of French verse, and the single circumstance which in that language distinguishes verse from prose: and yet he pretends not to say, that it hath any other effect but to raise surprise; he must mean curiosity, which is done by suspending the thought during the period, and bringing it out entire at the close. This indeed is one effect of inversion; but neither its sole effect, nor even that which is the most remarkable, as is made evident above. But waving censure, which is not an agreeable task, I enter into the matter; and begin with observing, that if conformity between words and their meaning be agreeable, it must of course be agreeable to find the same order or arrangement in both. Hence the beauty of a plain or natural style, where the order of the words corresponds precisely to the order of the ideas. Nor is this the single beauty of a natural style: it is also agreeable by its simplicity and perspicuity. This observation throws light upon the subject: for if a natural style be in itself agreeable, a transposed style cannot be so; and therefore its agreeableness must arise from admitting some positive beauty that is excluded in a natural style. To be confirmed in this opinion, we need but reflect upon some of the foregoing rules, which make it evident, that language by means of inversion, is susceptible of many beauties that are totally excluded in a natural arrangement. From these premises it clearly follows, that inversion ought not to be indulged, unless in order to reach some beauty superior to those of a natural style. It may with great certainty be pronounced, that every inversion which is not governed by this rule, will appear harsh and strained, and be disrelished by every one of taste. Hence the beauty of inversion when happily conducted; the beauty, not of an end, but of means, as furnishing opportunity for numberless ornaments that find no place in a natural style: hence the force, the elevation, the harmony, the cadence, of some compositions: hence the manifold beauties of the Greek and Roman tongues, of which living languages afford but faint imitations.

\* *Reflections sur la Poésie Française.*

## SECTION III.

Resemblance between articulate sounds and the things they represent—The beauty of this resemblance—A concord may exist without a resemblance—Examples given by critics of sense, may be resolved into a resemblance of effects—Slow motion imitated by long syllables; quick, by a succession of short ones—Interrupted motion, by monosyllables—Rough motion, rough sounds—Smooth, equable, smooth sounds—Prolonged motion, Alexandrian line—Gravity or solemnity, a period of long syllables—Melancholy, a period of polysyllables—Hard labor, long syllables made short—Rough words pronounced with difficulty—A climax of sound and sense, delightful—An anticlimax—The pleasure of a weak resemblance—The effect of pronunciation, or the resemblance between sense and sound—Difference between notes in singing and reading—The key note in reading—Cadence—Direction for pronunciation—In Greek, the tones marked—The comparison between pronunciation and singing—The former fixed; the latter, arbitrary—The notes of music, with respect to the first, agreeable—With respect to the second, music has its greatest variety—In pronunciation, in the third, the voice confined within three and a half notes—Last two equal singing.

A RESEMBLANCE between the sound of certain words and their signification, is a beauty that has escaped no critical writer, and yet it is not handled with accuracy by any of them. They have probably been of opinion, that a beauty so obvious to the feeling, requires no explanation. This is an error; and to avoid it, I shall give examples of the various resemblances between sound and signification, accompanied with an endeavor to explain why such resemblances are beautiful. I shall begin with examples where the resemblance between the sound and signification is the most entire; and shall next give examples where the resemblance is less and less so.

There being frequently a strong resemblance of one sound to another, it will not be surprising to find an articulate sound resembling one that is not articulate: thus the sound of a bow-string is imitated by the words that express it.

————— The string let fly,  
*Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.*  
*Odyssey, XXI. 449.*

The sound of felling trees in a wood:

Loud sounds the axe, redoubling strokes on strokes,  
 On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks  
 Headlong. Deep echoing groan the thickets brown,  
 Then *rustling, crackling, crashing*, thunder down.  
*Iliad, XXIII. 144.*

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
 The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.  
*Pope's Essay on Criticism, 369.*

Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms,  
 And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms:  
 When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves,  
 The rough rock roars: tumultuous boil the waves. *Pope.*

No person can be at a loss about the cause of this beauty: it is obviously that of imitation.

That there is any other natural resemblance of sound to signification, must not be taken for granted. There is no resemblance of sound to motion, nor of sound to sentiment. We are however apt to

be deceived by artful pronunciation: the same passage may be pronounced in many different tones, elevated or humble, sweet or harsh, brisk or melancholy, so as to accord with the thought or sentiment: such concord must be distinguished from that concord between sound and sense, which is perceived in some expressions independent of artful pronunciation: the latter is the poet's work; the former must be attributed to the reader. Another thing contributes still more to the deceit. In language, sound and sense being intimately connected, the properties of the one are readily communicated to the other: for example, the quality of grandeur, of sweetness, or of melancholy, though belonging to the thought solely, is transferred to the words, which by that means resemble, in appearance, the thought that is expressed by them.\* I have great reason to recommend these observations to the reader, considering how inaccurately the present subject is handled by critics: not one of them distinguishes the natural resemblance of sound and signification, from the artificial resemblances now described; witness Vida in particular, who in a very long passage has given very few examples but what are of the latter kind.†

That there may be a resemblance of articulate sounds to some that are not articulate, is self-evident; and that in fact there exist such resemblances successfully employed by writers of genius, is clear from the foregoing examples, and from many others that might be given. But we may safely pronounce, that this natural resemblance can be carried no farther: the objects of the different senses, differ so widely from each other, as to exclude any resemblance. Sound in particular, whether articulate or inarticulate, resembles not in any degree taste, smell, or motion: and as little can it resemble any internal sentiment, feeling or emotion. But must we then admit, that nothing but sound can be imitated by sound? Taking imitation in its proper sense, as importing a resemblance between two objects, the proposition must be admitted: and yet in many passages that are not descriptive of sound, every one must be sensible of a peculiar concord between the sound of the words and their meaning. As there can be no doubt of the fact, what remains is to inquire into its cause.

Resembling causes may produce effects that have no resemblance; and causes that have no resemblance may produce resembling effects. A magnificent building, for example, resembles not, in any degree, an heroic action; and yet the emotions they produce, are concordant, and bear a resemblance to each other. We are still more sensible of this resemblance in a song, when the music is properly adapted to the sentiment: there is no resemblance between thought and sound; but there is the strongest resemblance between the emotion raised by music tender and pathetic, and that raised by the complaint of an unsuccessful lover. Applying this observation to the present subject, it appears, that in some instances, the sound, even of a single word, makes an impression resembling that which is made by the thing it signifies: witness the word *running*, composed of two short syllables; and more remarkably the words *rarity*, *impetuosity*, *precipitation*. Brutal manners produce, in the

\* See Chap. 2. Part I. sect. 5

† Poet. L. 3. l. 365—454.

spectator, an emotion not unlike what is produced by a harsh and rough sound; and hence the beauty of the figurative expression *-ugged* manners. Again, the word *little*, being pronounced with a very small aperture of the mouth, has a weak and faint sound, which makes an impression resembling that made by a diminutive object. This resemblance of effects is still more remarkable where a number of words are connected in a period: words pronounced in succession make often a strong impression; and when this impression happens to accord with that made by the sense, we are sensible of a complex emotion, peculiarly pleasant; one proceeding from the sentiment, and one from the melody or sound of the words. But the chief pleasure proceeds from having these two concordant emotions combined in perfect harmony, and carried on in the mind to a full close.\* Except in the single case where sound is described, all the examples given by critics of sense being imitated in sound, resolve into a resemblance of effects: emotions raised by sound and signification may have a resemblance; but sound itself cannot have a resemblance to any thing but sound.

Proceeding now to particulars, and beginning with those cases where the emotions have the strongest resemblance, I observe, first, that by a number of syllables in succession, an emotion is sometimes raised extremely similar to that raised by successive motion; which may be evident even to those who are defective in taste, from the following fact, that the term *movement* in all languages is equally applied to both. In this manner, successive motion, such as walking, running, galloping, can be imitated by a succession of long or short syllables, or by a due mixture of both. For example, slow motion may be justly imitated in a verse where long syllables prevail; especially when aided by a slow pronunciation.

*Illi inter sese magnâ vi brachia tollunt.*

*Geor. IV. 174.*

On the other hand, swift motion is imitated by a succession of short syllables:

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*

Again:

*Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.*

Thirdly; a line composed of monosyllables, makes an impression, by the frequency of its pauses, similar to what is made by laborious interrupted motion:

With many a weary step, and many a groan,  
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.

*Odyssey, XI. 736.*

First march the heavy mules securely slow;  
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er craggs, o'er rocks they go.

*Iliad, XXIII. 138.*

Fourthly; the impression made by rough sounds in succession, resembles that made by rough or tumultuous motion: on the other hand, the impression of smooth sounds resembles that of gentle motion. The following is an example of both.

\* See Chap. 2. Part 4.

Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,  
 The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain;  
 Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide,  
 And ships secure without their halsters ride.  
*Odyssey, III. 118.*

Another example of the latter

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,  
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows  
*Essay on Criticism, 366.*

Fifthly; prolonged motion is expressed in an Alexandrine line  
 The first example shall be of slow motion prolonged.

A needless Alexandrine ends the song;  
 That like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.  
*Essay on Criticism, 356.*

The next example is of forcible motion prolonged:

The waves behind impel the waves before,  
 Wide-rolling, foaming high, and tumbling to the shore.  
*Iliad, XIII. 1004.*

The last shall be of rapid motion prolonged:

Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.  
*Essay on Criticism, 373.*

Again, speaking of a rock torn from the brow of a mountain:

Still gath'ring force, it smokes, and urg'd amain,  
 Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain.  
*Iliad, XIII. 197.*

Sixthly; a period consisting mostly of long syllables, that is, of syllables pronounced slow, produces an emotion resembling faintly that which is produced by gravity and solemnity. Hence the beauty of the following verse:

Olli sedato respondit corde Latinus.

It resembles equally an object that is insipid and uninteresting.

Tædet quotidianarum harum formarum.

*Terence, Eunuchus, Act II. Sc. 3.*

Seventhly; a slow succession of ideas is a circumstance that belongs equally to settled melancholy, and to a period composed of polysyllables pronounced slowly: and hence by similarity of emotions, the latter is imitative of the former:

In those deep solitudes, and awful cells,  
 Where heav'nly pensive Contemplation dwells.  
 And ever-musing melancholy reigns. *Pope, Eloisa to Abelard.*

Eighthly; a long syllable made short, or a short syllable made long, raises, by the difficulty of pronouncing contrary to custom, a feeling similar to that of hard labor:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
 The line too labors, and the words move slow. *Essay on Crit. 370.*

Ninthly; harsh or rough words pronounced with difficulty, excite a feeling similar to that which proceeds from the labor of thought to a dull writer.

Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
 And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a-year.  
*Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, l. 181.*

I shall close with one example more, which of all makes the finest figure. In the first section mention is made of a climax in sound; and in the second, of a climax in sense. It belongs to the present subject to observe, that when these coincide in the same passage, the concordance of sound and sense is delightful: the reader is conscious not only of pleasure from the two climaxes separately, but of an additional pleasure from their concordance, and from finding the sense so justly imitated by the sound. In this respect, no periods are more perfect than those borrowed from Cicero in the first section.

The concord between sense and sound is no less agreeable in what may be termed an *anticlimax*, where the progress is from great to little; for this has the effect to make diminutive objects appear still more diminutive. Horace affords a striking example:

Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

The arrangement here is singularly artful: the first place is occupied by the verb, which is the capital word by its sense as well as sound: the close is reserved for the word that is the meanest in sense as well as in sound. And it must not be overlooked, that the resembling sounds of the two last syllables give a ludicrous air to the whole.

Reviewing the foregoing examples, it appears to me, contrary to expectation, that, in passing from the strongest resemblances to those that are fainter, every step affords additional pleasure. Renewing the experiment again and again, I feel no wavering, but the greatest pleasure constantly from the faintest resemblances. And yet how can this be? for if the pleasure lie in imitation, must not the strongest resemblance afford the greatest pleasure? From this vexing dilemma I am happily relieved, by reflecting on a doctrine established in the chapter of resemblance and contrast, that the pleasure of resemblance is the greatest, where it is least expected, and where the objects compared are in their capital circumstances widely different. Nor will this appear surprising, when we descend to familiar examples. It raises no degree of wonder to find the most perfect resemblance between two eggs of the same bird: it is more rare to find such resemblance between two human faces; and upon that account such an appearance raises some degree of wonder: but this emotion rises to a still greater height, when we find in a pebble, an agate, or other natural production, any resemblance to a tree or to any organised body. We cannot hesitate a moment, in applying these observations to the present subject: what occasion of wonder can it be to find one sound resembling another, where both are of the same kind? It is not so common to find a resemblance between an articulate sound and one not articulate; which accordingly affords some slight pleasure. But the pleasure swells greatly, when we employ sound to imitate things it resembles not otherwise than by the effects produced in the mind.



I have had occasion to observe, that to complete the resemblance between sound and sense, artful pronunciation contributes not a little. Pronunciation therefore may be considered as a branch of the present subject; and with some observations upon it the section shall be concluded.

In order to give a just idea of pronunciation, it must be distinguished from singing. The latter is carried on by notes, requiring each of them a different aperture of the windpipe: the notes properly belonging to the former, are expressed by different apertures of the mouth, without varying the aperture of the windpipe. This, however, does not hinder pronunciation to borrow from singing, as one sometimes is naturally led to do, in expressing a vehement passion.

In reading, as in singing, there is a key-note: above this note the voice is frequently elevated, to make the sound correspond to the elevation of the subject: but the mind in an elevated state, is disposed to action; therefore, in order to a rest, it must be brought down to the key-note. Hence the term *cadence*.

The only general rule that can be given for directing the pronunciation, is, to sound the words in such a manner as to imitate the things they signify. In pronouncing words signifying what is elevated, the voice ought to be raised above its ordinary tone; and words signifying dejection of mind, ought to be pronounced in a low note. To imitate a stern and impetuous passion, the words ought to be pronounced rough and loud; a sweet and kindly passion, on the contrary, ought to be imitated by a soft and melodious tone of voice: in Dryden's ode of *Alexander's Feast*, the line *Faln, faln, faln, faln*, represents a gradual sinking of the mind; and therefore is pronounced with a falling voice by every one of taste, without instruction. In general, words that make the greatest figure ought to be marked with a peculiar emphasis. Another circumstance contributes to the resemblance between sense and sound, which is slow or quick pronunciation: for though the length or shortness of the syllables with relation to each other, be in prose ascertained in some measure, and in verse accurately; yet taking a whole line or period together, it may be pronounced slow or fast. A period, accordingly, ought to be pronounced slow, when it expresses what is solemn or deliberate; and ought to be pronounced quick, when it expresses what is brisk, lively, or impetuous.

The art of pronouncing with propriety and grace, being intended to make the sound an echo to the sense, scarcely admits of any other general rule than that above mentioned. It may indeed be branched out into many particular rules and observations: but without much success; because no language furnishes words to signify the different degrees of high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow. Before these differences can be made the subject of regular instruction, notes must be invented, resembling those employed in music. We have reason to believe, that in Greece every tragedy was accompanied with such notes, in order to ascertain the pronunciation; but the moderns hitherto have not thought of this refinement. Cicero,

indeed,\* without the help of notes, pretends to give rules for ascertaining the various tones of voice that are proper in expressing the different passions; and it must be acknowledged, that in this attempt he has exhausted the whole power of language. At the same time, every person of discernment will perceive, that these rules avail little in point of instruction: the very words he employs, are not intelligible, except to those who beforehand are acquainted with the subject.

To vary the scene a little, I propose to close with a slight comparison, between singing and pronouncing. In this comparison, the five following circumstances relative to articulate sound, must be kept in view. 1st, A sound or syllable is harsh or smooth. 2d, It is long or short. 3d, It is pronounced high or low. 4th, It is pronounced loud or soft. And, lastly, A number of words in succession, constituting a period or member of a period, are pronounced slow or quick. Of these five the first depending on the component letters, and the second being ascertained by custom, admit not any variety in pronouncing. The three last are arbitrary, depending on the will of the person who pronounces; and it is chiefly in the artful management of these that just pronunciation consists. With respect to the first circumstance, music has evidently the advantage; for all its notes are agreeable to the ear; which is not always the case of articulate sounds. With respect to the second, long and short syllables variously combined, produce a great variety of feet; yet far inferior to the variety that is found in the multiplied combinations of musical notes. With respect to high and low notes, pronunciation is still more inferior to singing; for it is observed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus,† that in pronouncing, *i. e.* without altering the aperture of the windpipe, the voice is confined within three notes and a half: singing has a much greater compass. With respect to the two last circumstances, pronunciation equals singing.

In this chapter, I have mentioned none of the beauties of language but what arise from words taken in their proper sense. Beauties that depend on the metaphorical and figurative power of words are reserved to be treated, Chap. XX.

\* De Oratore, l. iii. cap. 58.

† De Structura Orationis, sect. 2.

## SECTION IV.

## VERSIFICATION.

The different impressions of poetry and prose on the ear—The distinction between verse and prose—The laws to which verse is subject—Latin Hexameter and English heroic verse only, to be examined—The five things premised as of importance—The purposes for which pauses are necessary—The different rules to be observed in different cases—The heads under which Latin and Greek Hexameter are to be treated—Substitutes for Dactyles and Spondees—Exception to the rule that finds the pause after the fifth syllable—One syllable always distinguished by a capital accent—English heroic examined—Number—Quantity—Arrangement—Pause—Accent—Heroic, commonly Iambic—Exception—melody in heroic verse, arises from pause and accent—One capital pause in a line—Two inferior pauses—A full pause not to divide a word—A pause interjected between a noun and an adjective—Between a verb and an adverb—Between an agent and his actions—Between an active verb and the subject of the action—When the pause may be inserted—Concluding pause—Words separated in an inverted order—When a musical pause may be inserted—Double effect of accents—The effect of accenting a low word—Accent confined to long syllables—The most important accent—It is of two kinds—In expressing dejection, the capital accent excluded—The effect of the position of the accent on the sense—Different powers denoted by the lines from the different position of the pause—The first order—The second order—The third order—The fourth order—Each order distinguished by its final accent and pause—The sentiment in each order—Blank verse—Its advantages—The pauses and accents of blank verse—Its superior melody—Advantages of Hexameter over English rhyme—Blank verse unites the properties of both—The number and variety of pauses and accents of English rhyme—Other advantages of blank verse—The defects of French heroic verse—Not possible to introduce Hexameter into English—The foundation of rhyme in nature—Its effect in a couplet—Not fit for a lofty subject—Its effect on a low subject—Not fit for anguish or deep distress—Not suited to serious subjects.

THE music of verse, though handled by every grammarian, merits more attention than that with which it has been honored. It is a subject intimately connected with human nature; and to explain it thoroughly, several nice and delicate feelings must be employed. But before entering upon it, we must see what verse is, or, in other words, by what mark it is distinguished from prose—a point not so easy as may at first be apprehended. It is true, that the construction of verse is governed by precise rules; whereas prose is more loose, and scarcely subjected to any rules. But are the many who have no rules, left without means to make the distinction? and even with respect to the learned, must they apply the rule before they can with certainty pronounce whether the composition be prose or verse? This will hardly be maintained; and therefore instead of rules, the ear must be appealed to as the proper judge. But by what mark does the ear distinguish verse from prose? The proper and satisfactory answer is, that these make different impressions upon every one who has an ear. This advances us one step in our inquiry.

Taking it then for granted, that verse and prose make upon the ear different impressions; nothing remains but to explain this difference, and to assign its cause. To this end, I call to my aid, an observation made above upon the sound of words, that they are more agreeable to the ear when composed of long and short syllables, than when all the syllables are of the same sort: a continued

sound in the same tone, makes not a musical impression: the same note successively renewed by intervals, is more agreeable; but still makes not a musical impression. To produce that impression, variety is necessary as well as number: the successive sounds or syllables, must be some of them long, some of them short: and if also high and low, the music is the more perfect. The musical impression made by a period consisting of long and short syllables arranged in a certain order, is what the Greeks call *rythmus*, the Latins *numerus*, and we *melody* or *measure*. Cicero justly observe that in one continued sound there is no melody: "Numerus in continuatione nullus est." But in what follows he is wide of the truth if by *numerus* he means melody or musical measure: "Distinctio et æqualium et sæpe variorum intervallorum percussio, numerum conficit; quem in cadentibus guttis, quod intervallis distinguuntur, notare possumus."\* Falling drops, whether with equal or unequal intervals, are certainly not music: we are not sensible of a musical impression but in a succession of long and short notes. And this also was probably the opinion of the author cited, though his expression be a little unguarded.†

It will probably occur, that melody, if it depend on long and short syllables combined in a sentence, may be found in prose as well as in verse; considering especially, that in both, particular words are accented or pronounced in a higher tone than the rest; and therefore that verse cannot be distinguished from prose by melody merely. The observation is just; and it follows, that the distinction between them, since it depends not singly on melody, must arise from the difference of the melody: which is precisely the case; though that difference cannot with any accuracy be explained in words; all that can be said is, that verse is more musical than prose, and its melody more perfect. The difference between verse and prose, resembles the difference, in music properly so called, between the song and the recitative: and the resemblance is not the least complete, that these differences, like the shades of colors, approximate sometimes so nearly as scarcely to be discernible: the melody of a recitative approaches sometimes to that of a song; which, on the other hand, degenerates sometimes to that of a recitative. Nothing is more distinguishable from prose, than the bulk of Virgil's Hexameters: many of those composed by Horace, are very little removed from prose: Sapphic verse has a very sensible melody: that, on the other hand, of an Iambic, is extremely faint.‡

\* The distinction (of sounds) and (its) percussio (on the ear) at equal, and frequently at varying intervals, produce a *measured cadence*, which we may remark in the falling of drops, because they are repeated by intervals.

† From this passage, however, we discover the etymology of the Latin term for musical impression. Every one being sensible that there is no music in a continued sound; the first inquiries were probably carried no farther than to discover, that to produce a musical impression a number of sounds is necessary. A musical impression obtained the name of *numerus*, before it was clearly ascertained, that variety is necessary as well as number.

‡ Music, properly so called, is analyzed into melody and harmony. A succession of sounds so as to be agreeable to the ear, constitutes melody: harmony arises from co-existing sounds. Verse therefore can only reach melody, and not harmony.

This more perfect melody of articulate sounds, is what distinguishes verse from prose. Verse is subjected to certain inflexible laws; the number and variety of the component syllables being ascertained, and in some measure the order of succession. Such restraint makes it a matter of difficulty to compose in verse—a difficulty that is not to be surmounted but by a peculiar genius. Useful lessons conveyed to us in verse, are agreeable by the union of music with instruction: but are we for that reason to reject knowledge offered in a plainer dress? That would be ridiculous: for knowledge is of intrinsic merit, independent of the means of acquisition; and there are many, not less capable than willing to instruct us, who have no genius for verse. Hence the use of prose; which, for the reason now given, is not confined to precise rules. There belongs to it, a certain melody of an inferior kind, which ought to be the aim of every writer; but for succeeding in it, practice is necessary more than genius. Nor do we rigidly insist for melodious prose: provided the work convey instruction, its chief end, we are the less solicitous about its dress.

Having ascertained the nature and limits of our subject, I proceed to the laws by which it is regulated. These would be endless, were verse of all different kinds to be taken under consideration. I propose therefore to confine the inquiry, to Latin or Greek Hexameter, and to French and English heroic verse; which, perhaps, may carry me farther than the reader will choose to follow. The observations I shall have occasion to make, will at any rate be sufficient for a specimen; and these, with proper variations, may easily be transferred to the composition of other sorts of verse.

Before I enter upon particulars, it must be premised in general, that to verse of every kind, five things are of importance. 1st, The number of syllables that compose a verse line. 2d, The different lengths of syllables, i. e. the difference of time taken in pronouncing. 3d, The arrangement of these syllables combined in words. 4th, The pauses or stops in pronouncing. 5th, The pronouncing of syllables in a high or a low tone. The three first mentioned are obviously essential to verse: if any of them be wanting, there cannot be that higher degree of melody which distinguishes verse from prose. To give a just notion of the fourth, it must be observed, that pauses are necessary for three different purposes: one, to separate periods, and members of the same period, according to the sense; another, to improve the melody of verse; and the last, to afford opportunity for drawing breath in reading. A pause of the first kind is variable, being long or short, frequent or less frequent, as the sense requires. A pause of the second kind, being determined by the melody, is in no degree arbitrary. The last sort is in a measure arbitrary, depending on the reader's command of breath. But as one cannot read with grace, unless, for drawing breath, opportunity be taken of a pause in the sense or in the melody, this pause ought never to be distinguished from the others; and for that reason shall be laid aside. With respect then to the pauses of sense and of melody, it may be affirmed without hesitation, that their coincidence in verse is a capital

beauty: but as it cannot be expected, in a long work especially, that every line should be so perfect; we shall afterward have occasion to see, that the pause necessary for the sense must often, in some degree, be sacrificed to the verse-pause, and the latter sometimes to the former.

- The pronouncing of syllables in a high or low tone, contributes also to melody. In reading whether verse or prose, a certain tone is assumed, which may be called *the key-note*; and in that tone the bulk of the words are sounded. Sometimes to humor the sense, and sometimes the melody, a particular syllable is sounded in a higher tone; and this is termed *accenting a syllable*, or gracing it with an accent. Opposed to the accent, is the cadence, which I have not mentioned as one of the requisites of verse, because it is entirely regulated by the sense, and has no peculiar relation to verse. The cadence is a falling of the voice below the key-note at the close of every period; and so little is it essential to verse, that in correct reading the final syllable of every line is accented, that syllable only excepted which closes the period, where the sense requires a cadence. The reader may be satisfied of this by experiments; and for that purpose I recommend to him the *Rape of the Lock*, which, in point of versification, is the most complete performance in the English language. Let him consult in a particular period, canto 2, beginning at line 47, and closed line 52, with the word *gay*, which only of the whole final syllables is pronounced with a cadence. He may also examine another period in the 5th canto, which runs from line 45 to line 52.

Though the five requisites above mentioned, enter into the composition of every species of verse, they are, however, governed by different rules, peculiar to each species. Upon quantity only, one general observation may be premised, because it is applicable to every species of verse—that syllables, with respect to the time taken in pronouncing, are long or short; two short syllables, with respect to time, being precisely equal to a long one. These two lengths are essential to verse of all kinds; and to no verse, as far as I know, is a greater variety of time necessary in pronouncing syllables. The voice, indeed, is frequently made to rest longer than usual upon a word that bears an important signification; but this is done to humor the sense, and is not necessary for melody. A thing not more necessary for melody occurs with respect to accenting, similar to that now mentioned: A word signifying any thing humble, low, or dejected, is naturally, in prose, as well as in verse, pronounced in a tone below the key-note.

We are now sufficiently prepared for particulars; beginning with Latin or Greek Hexameter, which are the same. What I have to observe upon this species of verse, will come under the four following heads; number, arrangement, pause, and accent: for as to quantity, what is observed above may suffice.

Hexameter lines, as to time, are all of the same length; being equivalent to the time taken in pronouncing twelve long syllables or twenty-four short. An Hexameter line may consist of seventeen syllables; and when regular and not Spondiac, it never has fewer



than thirteen : whence it follows, that where the syllables are many, the plurality must be short ; where few, the plurality must be long.

This line is susceptible of much variety as to the succession of long and short syllables. It is, however, subjected to laws that confine its variety within certain limits ; and for ascertaining these limits, grammarians have invented a rule by Dactyles and Spondees, which they denominate *feet*. One at first view is led to think, that these feet are also intended to regulate the pronunciation : which is far from being the case ; for were one to pronounce according to these feet, the melody of an Hexameter line would be destroyed, or at best be much inferior to what it is when properly pronounced.\* These feet must be confined to regulate the arrangement, for they serve no other purpose. They are withal so artificial and complex, that I am tempted to substitute in their stead, other rules more simple and of more easy application ; for example, the following :—  
1st, The line must always commence with a long syllable, and close with two long preceded by two short. 2d, More than two short can never be found together, nor fewer than two. And, 3d, Two long syllables which have been preceded by two short, cannot

\* After giving some attention to this subject, and weighing deliberately every circumstance, I was necessarily led to the foregoing conclusion, That the Dactyle and Spondee are no other than artificial measures, invented for trying the accuracy of composition. Repeated experiments have convinced me, that though the sense should be neglected, an Hexameter line read by Dactyles and Spondees will not be melodious. And the composition of an Hexameter line demonstrates this to be true, without necessity of an experiment ; for, as will appear afterward, there must always, in this line, be a capital pause at the end of the fifth long syllable, reckoning, as above, two short for one long, and when we measure this line by Dactyles, and Spondees, the pause now mentioned divides always a Dactyle or a Spondee, without once falling in after either of these feet. Hence it is evident, that if a line be pronounced as it is scanned, by Dactyles and Spondees, the pause must utterly be neglected ; which destroys the melody, because this pause is essential to the melody of an Hexameter verse. If, on the other hand, the melody be preserved by making that pause, the pronouncing by Dactyles or Spondees must be abandoned.

What has led grammarians into the use of Dactyles and Spondees, seems not beyond the reach of conjecture. To produce melody, the Dactyle and the Spondee, which close every Hexameter line, must be distinctly expressed in the pronunciation. This discovery joined with another, that the foregoing part of the verse could be measured by the same feet, probably led grammarians to adopt these artificial measures, and perhaps rashly to conclude, that the pronunciation is directed by these feet as the composition is : the Dactyle and the Spondee at the close, serve indeed to regulate the pronunciation as well as the composition ; but in the foregoing part of the line, they regulate the composition only, not the pronunciation.

If we must have feet in verse to regulate the pronunciation, and consequently the melody, these feet must be determined by the pauses. All the syllables interjected between two pauses ought to be deemed one musical foot ; because, to preserve the melody, they must all be pronounced together, without any stop. And therefore, whatever number there are of pauses in an Hexameter line, the parts into which it is divided by these pauses, make just so many musical feet.

Connection obliges me here to anticipate, and to observe, that the same doctrine is applicable to English heroic verse. Considering its composition merely, it is of two kinds ; one composed of five Iambi ; and one of a Trochæus followed by four Iambi : but these feet afford no rule for pronouncing ; the musical feet being obviously those parts of the line that are interjected between two pauses. To bring out the melody, these feet must be expressed in the pronunciation ; or, which comes to the same, the pronunciation must be directed by the pauses, without regard to the Iambus or Trochæus.



also be followed by two short. These few rules fulfil all the conditions of an Hexameter line, with relation to order or arrangement. To these again a single rule may be substituted, for which I have a still greater relish, as it regulates more affirmatively the construction of every part. That I may put this rule into words with perspicuity, I take a hint from the twelve long syllables that compose an Hexameter line to divide it into twelve equal parts or portions, being each of them one long syllable or two short. A portion being thus defined, I proceed to the rule. The 1st, 3d, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, and 12th portions, must each of them be one long syllable; the 10th must always be two short syllables; the 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th, may either be one long or two short. Or to express the thing still more curtly, The 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th portions may be one long syllable or two short; the 10th must be two short syllables; all the rest must consist each of one long syllable. This fulfils all the conditions of an Hexameter line, and comprehends all the combinations of Dactyles and Spondees that this line admits.

Next in order comes the pause. At the end of every Hexameter line, every one must be sensible of a complete close or full pause; the cause of which follows. The two long syllables preceded by two short, which always close an Hexameter line, are a fine preparation for a pause: for long syllables, or syllables pronounced slow, resembling a slow and languid motion, tending to rest, naturally incline the mind to rest, or to pause; and to this inclination the two preceding short syllables contribute, which by contrast, make the slow pronounciation of the final syllables the more conspicuous. Beside this complete close or full pause at the end, others are also requisite for the sake of melody; of which I discover two clearly, and perhaps there may be more. The longest and most remarkable, succeeds the 5th portion: the other, which, being shorter and more faint, may be called *the semipause*, succeeds the 8th portion. So striking is the pause first mentioned, as to be distinguished even by the rudest ear: the monkish rhymes are evidently built upon it; in which by an invariable rule, the final word always chimes with that which immediately precedes the said pause:

De planctu cudo || metrum cum carmine nudo  
Mingere cum bumbis || res est saluberrima lumbis.

The difference of time in the pause and *semipause*, occasions another difference no less remarkable, that it is lawful to divide a word by a *semipause*, but never by a pause, the bad effect of which is sensibly felt in the following examples:

Effusus labor, at || que immitis rupta Tyranni.

Again: /

Observans nido im || plumas detraxit; at illa.

Again:

Loricam quam De || moleo detraxerat ipse.

The dividing of a word by a *semipause* has not the same bad effect:

Jamque pedem referens || casus e | vaserat omnes.

Again:

Qualis populea || mœrens Philo | melis sub umbra.

Again:

*Ludere quo vellem || calamo per | misit agresti.*

Lines, however, where words are left entire, without being divided even by a semipause, run by that means much the more sweetly:

*Nec gemere aërea || cessabit | turtur ab ulmo.*

Again:

*Quadrupedante putrem || sonitu quatit | ungula campum.*

Again:

*Eurydicea toto || referebant flumine ripae.*

The reason of these observations will be evident upon the slightest reflection. Between things so intimately connected in reading aloud, as are sense and sound, every degree of discord is unpleasant: and for that reason, it is a matter of importance, to make the musical pauses coincide as much as possible with those of sense; which is requisite, more especially, with respect to the pause, a deviation from the rule being less remarkable in a semipause. Considering the matter as to melody solely, it is indifferent whether the pauses be at the end of words or in the middle; but when we carry the sense along, it is disagreeable to find a word split into two by a pause, as if there were really two words: and though the disagreeableness here be connected with the sense only, it is by an easy transition of perceptions transferred to the sound; by which means, we conceive a line to be harsh and grating to the ear, when in reality it is only so to the understanding.\*

To the rule that fixes the pause after the fifth portion, there is one exception, and no more: If the syllable succeeding the 5th portion be short, the pause is sometimes postponed to it.

*Pupillis quos dura || premit custodia matrum.*

Again:

*In terras oppressa || gravi sub religione.*

Again:

*Et quorum pars magna || fui; quis talia fando.*

This contributes to diversify the melody; and where the words are smooth and liquid, is not ungraceful; as in the following examples:

*Formosam resonare || doces Amaryllida sylvas.*

Again:

*Agrícolas, quibus ipsa || procul discordibus armis.*

If this pause, placed as aforesaid after the short syllable, happen also to divide a word, the melody by these circumstances is totally annihilated. Witness the following line of Ennius, which is plain prose:

*Romæ mœnia terrâit impiger | Hanibal armis.*

Hitherto the arrangement of the long and short syllables of an Hexameter line and its different pauses, have been considered with respect to melody: but to have a just notion of Hexameter verse, these particulars must also be considered with respect to sense. There is not, perhaps, in any other sort of verse, such latitude in the long and short syllables; a circumstance that contributes greatly to that rich-

\* See Chap. 2 Part 1. sect. 5.

ness of melody which is remarkable in Hexameter verse, and which made Aristotle pronounce, that an epic poem in any other verse would not succeed.\* One defect, however, must not be dissembled, that the same means which contribute to the richness of the melody, render it less fit than several other sorts for a narrative poem. There cannot be a more artful contrivance, as above observed, than to close an Hexameter line with two long syllables preceded by two short. but unhappily this construction proves a great embarrassment to the sense; which will thus be evident. As in general, there ought to be a strict concordance between a thought and the words in which it is dressed; so in particular, every close in the sense ought to be accompanied with a close in the sound. In prose, this law may be strictly observed; but in verse, the same strictness would occasion insuperable difficulties. Willing to sacrifice to the melody of verse some share of the concordance between thought and expression, we freely excuse the separation of the musical pause from that of the sense during the course of a line; but the close of an Hexameter line is too conspicuous to admit this liberty: for which reason there ought always to be some pause in the sense at the end of every Hexameter line, were it but such a pause as is marked with a comma; and for the same reason, there ought never to be a full close in the sense but at the end of a line, because there the melody is closed. An Hexameter line, to preserve its melody, cannot well admit any greater relaxation; and yet in a narrative poem, it is extremely difficult to adhere strictly to the rule even with these indulgences. Virgil, the chief of poets for versification, is forced often to end a line without any close in the sense, and as often to close the sense during the running of a line; though a close in the melody during the movement of the thought, or a close in the thought during the movement of the melody, cannot be agreeable.

The accent, to which we proceed, is no less essential than the other circumstances above handled. By a good ear it will be discerned, that in every line there is one syllable distinguishable from the rest by a capital accent: that syllable, being the seventh portion, is invariably long.

Nec bene promeritis || capitâr nec | tangitur ira.

Again :

Non sibi sed toto || genitûm se | credere mundo.

Again :

Qualis spelunca || subitò com|motâ columba.

In these examples, the accent is laid upon the last syllable of a word; which is favorable to the melody in the following respect, that the pause, which for the sake of reading distinctly must follow every word, gives opportunity to prolong the accent. And for that reason, a line thus accented, has a more spirited air, than when the accent is placed on any other syllable. Compare the foregoing lines with the following:

Alba neque Assyrio || fucâtur | lana veneno.

Again :

Panditur interea || domus ômnipo|tentis Olympi

Again :

\* Poet. cap. 26.

Olli sedato || respōdit | corde Latinus.

In lines where the pause comes after the short syllable succeeding the fifth portion, the accent is displaced, and rendered less sensible: it seems to be split into two, and to be laid partly on the 5th portion, and partly on the 7th, its usual place; as in

Nuda genu nodôque || sinûs collecta fluentes.

Again :

Formosam resonâre || docês Amar|yllida sylvas.

Beside this capital accent, slighter accents are laid upon other portions; particularly upon the fourth, unless where it consists of two short syllables; upon the ninth, which is always a long syllable; and upon the eleventh, where the line concludes with a monosyllable. Such conclusion, by the by, impairs the melody, and for that reason is not to be indulged, unless where it is expressive of the sense. The following lines are marked with all the accents.

Ludere quæ vëllem calamô permîsit agresti.

Again :

Et duræ quêrcus sudâbunt rôscida mella.

Again :

Parturiunt môtēs, nascêtur ridiculûs mus.

Reflecting upon the melody of Hexameter verse, we find, that order or arrangement doth not constitute the whole of it; for when we compare different lines, equally regular as to the succession of long and short syllables, the melody is found in very different degrees of perfection; which is not occasioned by any particular combination of Dactyles and Spondees, or of long and short syllables, because we find lines where Dactyles prevail, and lines where Spondees prevail, equally melodious. Of the former take the following instance:

*Æneadum genetrix hominum divumque voluptas.*

Of the latter :

*Molli paulatim flavescet campus arista*

What can be more different as to melody than the two following lines, which, however, as to the succession of long and short syllables, are constructed precisely in the same manner?

Spond. Dact. Spond. Spond. Dact. Spond.  
Ad talos stola dimissa et circumdata palla.

*Hor.*

Spond. Dact. Spond. Spond. Dact. Spond.  
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cœlum.

*Lucr.*

In the former, the pause falls in the middle of a word, which is a great blemish, and the accent is disturbed by a harsh elision of the vowel *a* upon the particle *et*. In the latter, the pauses and the accent are all of them distinct and full: there is no elision; and the words are more liquid and sounding. In these particulars consists the beauty of an Hexameter line with respect to melody: and by neglecting these, many lines in the satires and epistles of Horace are less agreeable than plain prose; for they are neither the one nor the other in perfection. To draw melody from these lines, they must be pronounced without relation to the sense: it must not be regarded, that words are divided by pauses, nor that harsh elisions are multi-

plied. To add to the account, prosaic low-sounding words are introduced ; and which is still worse, accents are laid on them. Of such faulty lines take the following instances.

Candida rectaque sit, munda hactenus sit neque longa.  
Jupiter exclamat simul atque audirit ; at in se  
Custodes, lectica, ciniflones, parasitæ  
Optimus, est modulator, ut Alfenus Vafer omni  
Nunc illud tantum quaeram, meritone tibi sit.

Next in order comes English heroic verse, which shall be examined under the whole five heads, of number, quantity, arrangement, pause, and accent. This verse is of two kinds ; one named *rhyme* or *metre*, and one *blank verse*. In the former, the lines are connected two and two by similarity of sound in the final syllables ; and two lines so connected are termed a *couplet* : similarity of sound being avoided in the latter, couplets are banished. These two sorts must be handled separately, because there are many peculiarities in each. Beginning with rhyme or metre, the first article shall be discussed in a few words. Every line consists of ten syllables, five short and five long ; from which there are but two exceptions, both of them rare. The first is, where each line of a couplet is made eleven syllables, by an additional syllable at the end :

There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,  
And beaus' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.

The piece, you think, is incorrect ? Why, take it ;  
I'm all submission ; what you'd have it, make it.

This license is sufferable in a single couplet ; but if frequent, would give disgust.

The other exception concerns the second line of a couplet, which is sometimes stretched out to twelve syllables, termed an *Alexandrine line* :

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

It does extremely well when employed to close a period with a certain pomp and solemnity, where the subject makes that tone proper.

With regard to quantity, it is unnecessary to mention a second time, that the quantities employed in verse are but two, the one double of the other ; that every syllable is reducible to one or other of these standards ; and that a syllable of the larger quantity is termed *long*, and of the lesser quantity *short*. It belongs more to the present article, to examine what peculiarities there may be in the English language as to long and short syllables. Every language has syllables that may be pronounced long or short at pleasure ; but the English above all abounds in syllables of that kind : in words of three or more syllables, the quantity for the most part is invariable : the exceptions are more frequent in dissyllables : but as to monosyllables, they may, without many exceptions, be pronounced either long or short ; nor is the ear hurt by a liberty that is rendered familiar by custom. This shows, that the melody of English verse

must depend less upon quantity, than upon other circumstances: in which it differs widely from Latin verse, where every syllable, having but one sound, strikes the ear uniformly with its accustomed impression; and a reader must be delighted to find a number of such syllables, disposed so artfully as to be highly melodious. Syllables variable in quantity cannot possess this power: for though custom may render familiar, both a long and a short pronunciation of the same word; yet the mind wavering between the two sounds, cannot be so much affected as where every syllable has one fixed sound. What I have farther to say upon quantity, will come more properly under the following head, of arrangement.

And with respect to arrangement, which may be brought within a narrow compass, the English heroic line is commonly Iambic, the first syllable short, the second long, and so on alternately through the whole line. One exception there is, pretty frequent, of lines commencing with a Trochæus, i. e. a long and a short syllable: but this affects not the order of the following syllables, which go on alternately as usual, one short and one long. The following couplet affords an example of each kind.

Some in the fields of purest æther play,  
and bask and whiten in the blaze of day.

It is a great imperfection in English verse, that it excludes the bulk of polysyllables, which are the most sounding words in our language; for very few of them have such alteration of long and short syllables as to correspond to either of the arrangements mentioned. English verse accordingly is almost totally reduced to dissyllables and monosyllables: *magnanimity*, is a sounding word totally excluded: *impetuosity* is still a finer word, by the resemblance of the sound and sense; and yet a negative is put upon it, as well as upon numberless words of the same kind. Polysyllables composed of syllables long and short alternately, make a good figure in verse; for example, *observance*, *opponent*, *ostensive*, *pindaric*, *productive*, *prolific*, and such others of three syllables. *Imitation*, *imperfection*, *misdeemeanor*, *mitigation*, *moderation*, *observer*, *ornamental*, *regulator*, and others similar of four syllables, beginning with two short syllables, the third long, and the fourth short, may find a place in a line commencing with a Trochæus. I know not if there be any of five syllables. One I know of six, viz. *misinterpretation*: but words so composed are not frequent in our language.

One would not imagine without trial, how uncouth false quantity appears in verse; not less than a provincial tone or idiom. The article *the* is one of the few monosyllables that is invariably short; observe how harsh it makes a line where it must be pronounced long:

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind.

Again,

Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admir'd.

Let it be pronounced short, and it reduces the melody almost to nothing: better so however than false quantity. In the following examples we perceive the same defect:

And old impertinence || expel by new  
 With varying vanities || from ev'ry part  
 Love in these laybrinths || his slaves detains  
 New stratagems || the radiant lock to gain  
 Her eyes half languishing || half drown'd in tears  
 Roar'd for the handkerchief || that caus'd his pain  
 Passions like elements || though born to fight.

The great variety of melody conspicuous in English verse, arises chiefly from the pauses and accents; which are of greater importance than is commonly thought. There is a degree of intricacy in this branch of our subject, and it will be difficult to give a distinct view of it; but it is too late to think of difficulties after we are engaged. The pause, which paves the way to the accent, offers itself first to our examination; and from a very short trial, the following facts will be verified. 1st, A line admits but one capital pause. 2d, In different lines, we find this pause after the fourth syllable, after the fifth, after the sixth, and after the seventh. These four places of the pause lay a solid foundation for dividing English heroic lines into four kinds; and I warn the reader beforehand, that unless he attend to this distinction, he cannot have any just notion of the richness and variety of English versification. Each kind or order has a melody peculiar to itself, readily distinguishable by a good ear: and I am not without hopes to make the cause of this peculiarity sufficiently evident. It must be observed, at the same time, that the pause cannot be made indifferently at any of the places mentioned: it is the sense that regulates the pause, as will be seen afterward; and consequently, it is the sense that determines of what order every line must be: there can be but one capital musical pause in a line; and that pause ought to coincide, if possible, with a pause in the sense, in order that the sound may accord with the sense.

What is said shall be illustrated by examples of each sort or order. And first of the pause after the fourth syllable:

Back through the paths || of pleasing sense I ran.

Again,

Profuse of bliss || and pregnant with delight.

After the 5th:

So when an angel || by divine command,  
 With rising tempests || shakes a guilty land.

After the 6th:

Speed the soft intercourse || from soul to soul

Again,

Then from his closing eyes || thy form shall part,

After the 7th:

And taught the doubtful battle || where to rage.

Again,

And in the smooth description || murmur still.



Besides the capital pause now mentioned, inferior pauses will be discovered by a nice ear. Of these there are commonly two in each line: one before the capital pause, and one after it. The former comes invariably after the first long syllable, whether the line begin with a long syllable or a short one. The other in its variety imitates the capital pause: in some lines it comes after the 6th syllable, in some after the 7th, and in some after the 8th. Of these semipauses take the following examples.

1st and 8th:

Led | through a sad || variety | of wo.

1st and 7th:

Still | on that breast || enamor'd | let me lie.

2d and 8th:

From storms | a shelter || and from heat | a shade.

2d and 6th:

Let wealth | let honor || wait | the wedded dame.

2d and 7th:

Above | all pain || all passion | and all pride.

Even from these few examples it appears, that the place of the last semipause, like that of the full pause, is directed in a good measure by the sense. Its proper place with respect to the melody is after the eighth syllable, so as to finish the line with an iambus distinctly pronounced, which, by a long syllable after a short, is a preparation for rest: but sometimes it comes after the 6th, and sometimes after the 7th syllable, in order to avoid a pause in the middle of a word, or between two words intimately connected; and so far melody is justly sacrificed to sense.

In discoursing of Hexameter verse, it was laid down as a rule, that a full pause ought never to divide a word: such licence deviates too far from the coincidence that ought to be between the pauses of sense and of melody. The same rule must obtain in an English line; and we shall support reason by experiments:

A noble superfluity it craves

Abhor, a perpetuity should stand.

Are these lines distinguishable from prose? Scarcely, I think.

The same rule is not applicable to a semipause, which being short and faint, is not sensibly disagreeable when it divides a word:

Relentless walls || whose darksome round | contains

For her | white virgins || hymeneals sing

In these | deep solitudes || and awful cells.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that the melody here suffers in some degree: a word ought to be pronounced without any rest between its component syllables: a semipause that bends to this rule, is scarcely perceived.

The capital pause is so essential to the melody, that one cannot be too nice in the choice of its place, in order to have it clear and dis-

tinct. It cannot be in better company than with a pause in the sense; and if the sense require but a comma after the fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh syllable, it is sufficient for the musical pause. But to make such coincidence essential, would cramp versification too much; and we have experience for our authority, that there may be a pause in the melody where the sense requires none. We must not, however, imagine, that a musical pause may come after any word indifferently: some words, like syllables of the same word, are so intimately connected, as not to bear a separation even by a pause. The separating, for example, of a substantive from its article would be harsh and unpleasant: witness the following line, which cannot be pronounced with a pause as marked,

If Delia smile, the || flow'rs begin to spring. "

But ought to be pronounced in the following manner,

If Delia smile, || the flow'rs begin to spring.

If then it be not a matter of indifference where to make the pause, there ought to be rules for determining what words may be separated by a pause, and what are incapable of such separation. I shall endeavor to ascertain these rules; not chiefly for their utility, but in order to unfold some latent principles, that tend to regulate our taste even where we are scarcely sensible of them: and to that end, the method that appears the most promising, is to run over the verbal relations, beginning with the most intimate. The first that presents itself is that of adjective and substantive, being the relation of subject and quality, the most intimate of all: and with respect to such intimate companions, the question is, whether they can bear to be separated by a pause. What occurs is, that a quality cannot exist independent of a subject; nor are they separable even in imagination, because they make parts of the same idea: and for that reason, with respect to melody as well as sense, it must be disagreeable, to bestow upon the adjective a sort of independent existence, by interjecting a pause between it and its substantive. I cannot therefore approve the following lines, nor any of the sort; for to my taste they are harsh and unpleasant.

Of thousand bright || inhabitants of air  
The sprites of fiery || termagants inflame  
The rest, his many-colour'd || robe conceal'd  
The same, his ancient || personage to deck  
Ev'n here, where frozen || Chastity retires  
I sit, with sad || civility, I read  
Back to my native || moderation slide  
Or shall we ev'ry || decency confound  
Time was, a sober || Englishman would know  
And place, on good || security, his gold  
Taste, that eternal || wanderer, which flies  
But ere the tenth || revolving day was run  
First let the just || equivalent be paid.

Go, threat thy earth-born ! Myrmidon\* out here  
 Haste to the fierce ! Achilles' tent (he cries)  
 All but the ever-wakeful ! eyes of Jove  
 Your own resistless ! eloquence employ.

I have upon this article multiplied examples, that in a case where I have the misfortune to dislike what passes current in practice, every man upon the spot may judge by his own taste. And to taste I appeal; for though the foregoing reasoning appears to me just, it is, however, too subtle to afford conviction in opposition to taste.

Considering this matter superficially, one might be apt to imagine, that it must be the same, whether the adjective go first, which is the natural order, or the substantive, which is indulged by the laws of inversion. But we soon discover this to be a mistake: color, for example, cannot be conceived independent of the surface colored; but a tree may be conceived, as growing in a certain spot, as of a certain kind, and as spreading its extended branches all around, without ever thinking of its color. In a word, a subject may be considered with some of its qualities independent of others; though we cannot form an image of any single quality independent of the subject. Thus then though an adjective named first be inseparable from the substantive, the proposition does not reciprocate: an image can be formed of the substantive independent of the adjective; and for that reason, they may be separated by a pause, when the substantive takes the lead.

For thee the fates ! severely kind ordain  
 And curs'd with hearts ! unknowing how to yield.

The verb and adverb are precisely in the same condition with the substantive and adjective. An adverb, which modifies the action expressed by the verb, is not separable from the verb even in imagination; and therefore I must also give up the following lines:

And which it much ! becomes you to forget  
 'Tis one thing madly ! to disperse my store.

But an action may be conceived with some of its modifications, leaving out others; precisely as a subject may be conceived with some of its qualities, leaving out others: and, therefore, when by inversion the verb is first introduced, it has no bad effect to interject a pause between it and the adverb that follows. This may be done at the close of a line, where the pause is at least as full as that which divides the line:

While yet he spoke, the Prince advancing drew  
 Nigh to the lodge, &c.

The agent and its action come next, expressed in grammar by the active substantive and its verb. Between these, placed in their natural order, there is no difficulty of interjecting a pause: an active being is not always in motion, and therefore it is easily separable in idea from its action: when in a sentence the substantive takes the lead, we know not that action is to follow; and as rest must precede

the commencement of motion, this interval is a proper opportunity for a pause.

But when by inversion the verb is placed first, is it lawful to separate it by a pause from the active substantive? I answer, No; because an action is not an idea separable from the agent, more than a quality from the subject to which it belongs. Two lines of the first rate for beauty, have always appeared to me exceptionable, upon account of the pause thus interjected between the verb and the consequent substantive; and I have now discovered a reason to support my taste:

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,  
Where heav'nly pensive ! Contemplation dwells,  
And ever musing ! Melancholy reigns.

The point of the greatest delicacy regards the active verb and the passive substantive placed in their natural order. On the one hand, it will be observed, that these words signify things which are not separable in idea. Killing cannot be conceived without a being that is put to death, nor painting without a surface upon which the colors are spread. On the other hand, an action and the thing on which it is exerted, are not, like subject and quality, united in one individual object: the active substantive is perfectly distinct from that which is passive; and they are connected by one circumstance only, that the action of the former is exerted upon the latter. This makes it possible to take the action to pieces, and to consider it first with relation to the agent, and next with relation to the patient. But after all, so intimately connected are the parts of the thought, that it requires an effort to make a separation even for a moment: the subtilizing to such a degree is not agreeable, especially in works of imagination. The best poets, however, taking advantage of this subtlety, scruple not to separate, by a pause, an active verb from the thing upon which it is exerted. Such pauses in a long work may be indulged; but taken singly, they certainly are not agreeable; and I appeal to the following examples:

The peer now spreads || the glitt'ring forfex wide  
As ever sully'd || the fair face of light  
Repair'd to search || the gloomy cave of Spleen  
Nothing, to make || Philosophy thy friend  
Shou'd chance to make || the well dress'd rabble stare  
Or cross, to plunder || provinces, the main  
These madmen ever hurt || the church or state  
How shall we fill || a library with wit  
What better teach || a foreigner the tongue  
Sure, if I spare || the minister, no rules  
Of honour bind me, not to maul his tools.

On the other hand, when the passive substantive is by inversion first named, there is no difficulty of interjecting a pause between it and the verb, more than when the active substantive is first named. The same reason holds in both, that though a verb cannot be sepa-

rated in idea from the substantive which governs it, and scarcely from the substantive it governs; yet a substantive may always be conceived independent of the verb: when the passive substantive is introduced before the verb, we know not that an action is to be exerted upon it; therefore we may rest till the action commences. For the sake of illustration take the following examples:

Shrines! where their vigils || pale-ey'd virgins keep  
 Soon as thy letters || trembling I uncloze  
 No happier task || these faded eyes pursue.

What is said about the pause, leads to a general observation, that the natural order of placing the active substantive and its verb, is more friendly to a pause than the inverted order; but that in all the other connections, inversion affords a far better opportunity for a pause. And hence one great advantage of blank verse over rhyme; its privilege of inversion giving it a much greater choice of pauses than can be had in the natural order of arrangement.

We now proceed to the slighter connections, which shall be discussed in one general article. Words connected by conjunctions and prepositions admit freely a pause between them, which will be clear from the following instances:

Assume what sexes || and what shape they please  
 The light militia || of the lower sky.

Connecting particles were invented to unite in a period two substances signifying things occasionally united in the thought, but which have no natural union: and between two things not only separable in idea, but really distinct, the mind, for the sake of melody, cheerfully admits by a pause a momentary disjunction of their occasional union.

One capital branch of the subject is still upon hand, to which I am directed by what is just now said. It concerns those parts of speech which singly represent no idea, and which become not significant till they are joined to other words. I mean conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and such like accessories, passing under the name of *particles*. Upon these the question occurs, whether they can be separated by a pause from the words that make them significant? Whether, for example, in the following lines, the separation of the accessory preposition from the principal substantive be according to rule?

The goddess with || a discontented air  
 And heighten'd by || the diamond's circling rays  
 When victims at || yon altar's foot we lay  
 So take it in || the very words of Creech  
 An ensign of || the delegates of Jove  
 Two ages o'er || his native realm he reign'd  
 While angels with || their silver wings o'ershade.

Or the separation of the conjunction from the word that is connected by it with the antecedent word:

Takthybins and † Eurybates the good

It will be obvious at the first glance, that the foregoing reasoning upon objects naturally connected, is not applicable to words which of themselves are mere ciphers: we must, therefore, have recourse to some other principle for solving the present question. These particles out of their place are totally insignificant: to give them a meaning, they must be joined to certain words; and the necessity of this junction, together with custom, forms an artificial connection that has a strong influence upon the mind: it cannot bear even a momentary separation, which destroys the sense, and is at the same time contradictory to practice. Another circumstance tends still more to make this separation disagreeable in lines of the first and third order, that it bars the accent, which will be explained afterward, in treating of the accent.

Hitherto we have spoken of that pause only which divides the line. We proceed to the pause that concludes the line; and the question is, whether the same rules are applicable to both? This must be answered by making a distinction. In the first line of a couplet, the concluding pause differs little, if at all, from the pause that divides the line; and for that reason, the rules are applicable to both equally. The concluding pause of the couplet is in a different condition: it resembles greatly the concluding pause in an Hexameter line. Both of them indeed are so remarkable, that they never can be graceful, unless where they accompany a pause in the sense. Hence it follows, that a couplet ought always to be finished with some close in the sense; if not a point, at least a comma. The truth is, that this rule is seldom transgressed. In Pope's works, I find very few deviations from the rule. Take the following instances:

Nothing is foreign: parts relate to whole;  
One all-extending, all-preserving soul  
Connects each being —

Another:

To draw fresh colors from the vernal flow'rs,  
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs  
A brighter wash —

I add, with respect to pauses in general, that supposing the connection to be so slender as to admit a pause, it follows not that a pause may in every such case be admitted. There is one rule to which every other ought to bend, that the sense must never be wounded or obscured by the music; and upon that account I condemn the following lines:

Ulysses, first † in public cares, she found  
And,  
Who rising, high † th' imperial sceptre rais'd.

With respect to inversion, it appears, both from reason and experiments, that many words which cannot bear a separation in their natural order, admit a pause when inverted. And it may be added, that when two words, or two members of a sentence, in their natural order, can be separated by a pause, such separation can never be

amiss in an inverted order. An inverted period, which deviates from the natural train of ideas, requires to be marked in some measure even by pauses in the sense, that the parts may be distinctly known. Take the following examples :

As with cold lips || I kiss'd the sacred veil  
 With other beauties || charm my partial eyes  
 Full in my view || set all the bright abode  
 With words like these || the troops Ulysses rul'd  
 Back to th' assembly roll || the thronging train  
 Not for their grief || the Grecian host I blame.

The same where the separation is made at the close of the first line of the couplet :

For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease,  
 Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.

The pause is tolerable even at the close of the couplet, for the reason just now suggested, that inverted members require some slight pause in the sense :

'Twas where the plane tree spreads its shades around :  
 The altars heav'd ; and from the crumbling ground  
 A mighty dragon shot.

Thus a train of reasoning has insensibly led us to conclusions with regard to the musical pause, very different from those in the first section, concerning the separating by a circumstance of words intimately connected. One would conjecture, that wherever words are separable by interjecting a circumstance, they should be equally separable by interjecting a pause : but, upon a more narrow inspection, the appearance of analogy vanishes. This will be evident from considering, that a pause in the sense distinguishes the different members of a period from each other ; whereas, when two words of the same member are separated by a circumstance, all the three make still but one member ; and therefore that words may be separated by an interjected circumstance, though these words are not separated by a pause in the sense. This sets the matter in a clear light ; for, as observed above, a musical pause is intimately connected with a pause in the sense, and ought, as far as possible, to be governed by it : particularly a musical pause ought never to be placed where a pause is excluded by the sense ; as, for example, between the adjective and following substantive, which make parts of the same idea ; and still less between a particle and the word that makes it significant.

Abstracting at present from the peculiarity of melody arising from the different pauses, it cannot fail to be observed in general, that they introduce into our verse no slight degree of variety. A number of uniform lines having all the same pause, are extremely fatiguing ; which is remarkable in French versification. This imperfection will be discerned by a fine ear even in the shortest succession, and becomes intolerable in a long poem. Pope excels in the



variety of his melody ; which, if different kinds can be compared, is indeed no less perfect than that of Virgil.

From what is last said, there ought to be one exception. Uniformity in the members of a thought demands equal uniformity in the verbal members which express that thought. When therefore resembling objects or things are expressed in a plurality of verse-lines, these lines in their structure ought to be as uniform as possible ; and the pauses in particular ought all of them to have the same place. Take the following examples :

By foreign hands || thy dying eyes were clos'd,  
By foreign hands || thy decent limbs compos'd,  
By foreign hands || thy humble grave adorn'd.

Again :

Bright as the sun || her eyes the gazers strike ;  
And, like the sun, || they shine on all alike.

Speaking of Nature, or the God of Nature :

Warms in the sun || refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars || and blossoms in the trees ;  
Lives through all life || extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided || operates unspent.

Pauses will detain us longer than was foreseen ; for the subject is not yet exhausted. It is laid down above, that English heroic verse admits no more than four capital pauses ; and that the capital pause of every line is determined by the sense to be after the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, or seventh syllable. That this doctrine holds true as far as melody alone is concerned, will be testified by every good ear. At the same time, I admit, that this rule may be varied where the sense or expression requires a variation, and that so far the melody may justly be sacrificed. Examples accordingly are not unfrequent, in Milton especially, of the capital pause being after the first, the second, or the third syllable. And that this license may be taken, even gracefully, when it adds vigor to the expression, will be clear from the following example. Pope, in his translation of Homer, describes a rock broke off from a mountain, and hurling to the plain, in the following words :

From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds ;  
At every shock the crackling wood resounds ;  
Still gath'ring force, it smokes ; and urg'd amain,  
Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain :  
There stops. || So Hector. Their whole force he prov'd,  
Resistless when he rag'd ; and when he stopt, unmov'd.

In the penult line, the proper place of the musical pause is at the end of the fifth syllable ; but it enlivens the expression by its coincidence with that of the sense at the end of the second syllable : stopping short before the usual pause in the melody, aids the impression that is made by the description of the stone's stopping short ; and what is lost to the melody by this artifice, is more than compensated by the force that is added to the description. Milton makes a happy use of this license : witness the following examples from his *Paradise Lost* :

—————Thus with the year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day || or the sweet approach of even or morn.

Celestial voices to the midnight-air  
Sole || or responsive each to other's note.

And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook || but delay'd to strike.

—————And wild uproar  
Stood rul'd || stood vast infinitude confin'd.

—————And hard'ning in his strength  
Glories || for never since created man  
Met such embodied force.

From his slack hand the garland wreath'd for Eve  
Down dropp'd || and all the faded roses shed.

Of unessential night, receives him next,  
Wide gaping || and with utter loss of being,  
Threatens him, &c.

—————For now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him || round he throws his baleful eyes, &c.

If we consider the foregoing passages with respect to melody singly, the pauses are undoubtedly out of their proper place; but being united with those of the sense, they enforce the expression, and enliven it greatly; for, as has been more than once observed, the beauty of expression is communicated to the sound, which by a natural deception, makes even the melody appear more perfect than if the musical pauses were regular.

To explain the rules of accenting, two general observations must be premised. The first is, that accents have a double effect: they contribute to the melody, by giving it air and spirit; they contribute no less to the sense, by distinguishing important words from others.\* These two effects never can be separated, without impairing the concord that ought to subsist between the thought and the melody: an accent, for example, placed on a low word, has the effect to burlesque it, by giving it an unnatural elevation; and the injury thus done to the sense does not rest there, for it seems also to injure the melody. Let us only reflect what a ridiculous figure a particle must make with an accent or emphasis put upon it—a particle that of itself has no meaning, and that serves only, like cement, to unite words significant. The other general observation is, that a word of whatever number of syllables, is not accented upon more than one of them. The reason is, that the object is set in its best light by a single accent, so as to make more than one unnecessary for the sense: and if another be added, it must be for the sound merely; which would be a transgression of the foregoing rule, by separating a musical accent from that which is requisite for the sense.

Keeping in view the foregoing observations, the doctrine of accenting English heroic verse is extremely simple. In the first place, accenting is confined to the long syllables; for a short syllable is not capable of an accent. In the next place, as the melody is

\* An accent considered with respect to sense is termed *emphasis*.

enriched in proportion to the number of accents, every word that has a long syllable may be accented; unless the sense interpose, which rejects the accenting of a word that makes no figure by its signification. According to this rule, a line may admit five accents—a case by no means rare.

But supposing every long syllable to be accented, there is, in every line, one accent that makes a greater figure than the rest, being that which precedes the capital pause. It is distinguished into two kinds; one that is immediately before the pause, and one that is divided from the pause by a short syllable. The former belongs to lines of the first and third order; the latter to those of the second and fourth. Examples of the first kind:

Smooth flow the wâves || the zephyrs gently play,  
Belinda smil'd || and all the world was gay.  
He rais'd his azure wând || and thus began.

Examples of the other kind:

There lay three gârters || half a pair of gloves,  
And all the trôphies || of his former loves.  
Our humble prôvince || is to tend the fair,  
Not a less pléasing || though less glorious care.  
And hew triumphal ârches || to the ground

'These accents make different impressions on the mind, which will be the subject of a following speculation. In the mean time, it may be safely pronounced a capital defect in the composition of verse, to put a low word, incapable of an accent, in the place where this accent should be: this bars the accent altogether; than which I know no fault more subversive of the melody, if it be not the barring of a pause altogether. I may add affirmatively, that no single circumstance contributes more to the energy of verse, than to put an important word where the accent should be, a word that merits a peculiar emphasis. To show the bad effect of excluding the capital accent, I refer the reader to some instances given above,\* where particles are separated by a pause from the capital words that make them significant; and which particles ought, for the sake of melody, to be accented, were they capable of an accent. Add to these the following instances from the Essay on Criticism.

Of leaving what    is natural and fit	line 448.
Not yet purg'd off,    of spleen and sour disdain	l. 528.
No pardon vile    obscenity should find	l. 531.
When love was all    an easy monarch's care	l. 537.
For 'tis but half    a judge's task to know	l. 56 <sup>o</sup>
'Tis not enough,    taste, judgment, learning, join	l. 563.
That only makes    superior sense belov'd	l. 578.
Whose right it is,    uncensur'd, to be dull	l. 590.
'Tis best sometimes,    your censure to restrain.	l. 597.

When this fault is at the end of a line that closes a couplet, it leaves not the slightest trace of melody:

\* Pages 308, 309

But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,  
The strong connections, nice dependencies.

In a line expressive of what is humble or dejected, it improves the resemblance between the sound and sense to exclude the capital accent. This, to my taste, is a beauty in the following lines.

In these deep solitudes || and awful cells

The poor inhabitant || beholds in vain.

To conclude this article, the accents are not, like the syllables, confined to a certain number: some lines have no fewer than five, and there are lines that admit not above one. This variety, as we have seen, depends entirely on the different powers of the component words: particles, even where they are long by position, cannot be accented; and polysyllables whatever space they occupy, admit but one accent. Polysyllables have another defect, that they generally exclude the full pause. It is shown above, that few polysyllables can find place in the construction of English verse; and here are reasons for excluding them, could they find place.

I am now ready to fulfil a promise concerning the four sorts of lines that enter into English heroic verse. That these have, each of them, a peculiar melody distinguishable by a good ear, I ventured to suggest, and promised also to account for it: and though the subject is extremely delicate, I am not without hopes of making good my engagement. But first, by way of precaution, I warn the candid reader not to expect this peculiarity of modulation in every instance. The reason why it is not always perceptible has been mentioned more than once, that the thought and expression have a great influence upon the melody; so great, as in many instances to make the poorest melody pass for rich and spirited. This consideration makes me insist upon a concession or two that will not be thought unreasonable: first, that the experiment be tried upon lines equal with respect to the thought and expression; for otherwise one may easily be misled in judging of the melody: and next, that these lines be regularly accented before the pause; for upon a matter abundantly refined in itself, I would not willingly be embarrassed with faulty and irregular lines.

These preliminaries adjusted, I begin with some general observations, that will save repeating the same thing over and over upon every example. And first, an accent succeeded by a pause, as in lines of the first and third order, makes a much greater figure than where the voice goes on without a stop. The fact is so certain, that no person who has an ear can be at a loss to distinguish that accent from others. Nor have we far to seek for the efficient cause: the elevation of an accenting tone produces in the mind a similar elevation, which continues during the pause;\* but where the pause is sepa-

\* Hence the liveliness of the French language as to sound, above the English; the last syllable in the former being generally long and accented, the long syllable in the latter being generally as far back in the word as possible, and often with an accent. For this difference I find no cause so probable as temperament and disposition; the French being brisk and lively, the English sedate and reserved: and this, if it hold, is a pregnant instance of a resemblance between the character of a people and that of their language.

rated from the accent by a short syllable, as in lines of the second and fourth order, the impression made by the accent is more slight when there is no stop, and the elevation of the accent is gone in a moment by the falling of the voice in pronouncing the short syllable that follows. The pause also is sensibly affected by the position of the accent. In lines of the first and third order, the close conjunction of the accent and pause, occasions a sudden stop without preparation, which rouses the mind, and bestows on the melody a spirited air. When, on the other hand, the pause is separated from the accent by a short syllable, which always happens in lines of the second and fourth order, the pause is soft and gentle: for this short unaccented syllable, succeeding one that is accented, must of course be pronounced with a falling voice, which naturally prepares for a pause; and the mind falls gently from the accented syllable, and slides into rest as it were insensibly. Farther, the lines themselves derive different powers from the position of the pause, which will thus appear. A pause after the fourth syllable divides the line into two unequal portions, of which the larger comes last: this circumstance resolving the line into an ascending series, makes an impression in pronouncing like that of ascending; and to this impression contribute the redoubled effort in pronouncing the larger portion, which is last in order. The mind has a different feeling when the pause succeeds the fifth syllable, which divides the line into two equal parts: these parts, pronounced with equal effort, are agreeable by their uniformity. A line divided by a pause after the sixth syllable, makes an impression opposite to that first mentioned: being divided into two unequal portions, of which the shorter is last in order, it appears like a slow descending series; and the second portion being pronounced with less effort than the first, the diminished effort prepares the mind for rest. And this preparation for rest is still more sensibly felt where the pause is after the seventh syllable, as in lines of the fourth order.

To apply these observations is an easy task. A line of the first order is of all the most spirited and lively: the accent, being followed instantly by a pause, makes an illustrious figure: the elevated tone of the accent elevates the mind: the mind is supported in its elevation by the sudden unprepared pause, which rouses and animates: and the line itself, representing by its unequal division an ascending series, carries the mind still higher, making an impression similar to that of going upward. The second order has a modulation sensibly sweet, soft, and flowing; the accent is not so sprightly as in the former, because a short syllable intervenes between it and the pause: its elevation, by the same means, vanishes instantaneously: the mind, by a falling voice, is gently prepared for a stop: and the pleasure of uniformity from the division of the line into two equal parts, is calm and sweet. The third order has a modulation not so easily expressed in words: it in part resembles the first order, by the liveliness of an accent succeeded instantly by a full pause: but then the elevation occasioned by this circumstance, is balanced in some degree by the remitted effort in pronouncing the

second portion, which remitted effort has a tendency to rest. Another circumstance distinguishes it remarkably: its capital accent comes late, being placed on the sixth syllable: and this circumstance bestows on it an air of gravity and solemnity. The last order resembles the second in the mildness of its accent, and softness of its pause; it is still more solemn than the third, by the lateness of its capital accent: it also possesses in a higher degree than the third, the tendency to rest: and by that circumstance is of all the best qualified for closing a period in the completest manner.

But these are not all the distinguishing characters of the different orders. Each order, also, is distinguished by its final accent and pause: the unequal division in the first order, makes an impression of ascending; and the mind at the close is in the highest elevation, which naturally prompts it to put a strong emphasis upon the concluding syllable, whether by raising the voice to a sharper tone, or by expressing the word in a fuller tone. This order accordingly is of all the least proper for concluding a period, where a cadence is proper and not an accent. The second order being destitute of the impression of ascent, cannot rival the first order in the elevation of its concluding accent, nor consequently in the dignity of its concluding pause; for these have a mutual influence. This order, however, with respect to its close, maintains a superiority over the third and fourth orders: in these, the close is more humble, being brought down by the impression of descent, and by the remitted effort in pronouncing; considerably in the third order, and still more considerably in the last. According to this description, the concluding accents and pauses of the four orders being reduced to a scale, will form a descending series probably in an arithmetical progression.

After what is said, will it be thought refining too much to suggest, that the different orders are qualified for different purposes, and that a poet of genius will naturally be led to make a choice accordingly? I cannot think this altogether chimerical. As it appears to me, the first order is proper for a sentiment that is bold, lively, or impetuous; the third order is proper for what is grave, solemn, or lofty; the second for what is tender, delicate, or melancholy, and in general for all the sympathetic emotions; and the last for subjects of the same kind, when tempered with any degree of solemnity. I do not contend, that any one order is fitted for no other task but that assigned it; for at that rate, no sort of melody would be left for accompanying thoughts that have nothing peculiar in them. I only venture to suggest, and I do it with diffidence, that each of the orders is peculiarly adapted to certain subjects, and better qualified than the others for expressing them. The best way to judge is by experiment; and to avoid the imputation of a partial search, I shall confine my instances to a single poem, beginning with the

#### First order.

On her white breast, a sparkling cross she wore,  
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.  
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,  
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:

Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;  
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.  
 Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,  
 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.  
 Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
 Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide  
 If to her share some female errors fall,  
 Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

*Rape of the Lock.*

In accounting for the remarkable liveliness of this passage, it will be acknowledged by every one who has an ear, that the melody must come in for a share. The lines, all of them, are of the first order: a very unusual circumstance in the author of this poem, so eminent for variety in his versification. Who can doubt, that he has been led by delicacy of taste to employ the first order preferably to the others?

Second order.

Our humble province is to tend the fair,  
 Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;  
 To save the powder from too rude a gale,  
 Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;  
 To draw fresh colors from the vernal flow'rs;  
 To steal from rainbows, ere they drop their show'rs, &c.

Again:

Oh, thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
 Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.  
 Sudden, these honors shall be snatch'd away,  
 And curs'd for ever this victorious day.

Third order.

To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,  
 We trust th' important charge, the petticoat.

Again:

Oh say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,  
 Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?

A plurality of lines of the fourth order, would not have a good effect in succession; because, by a remarkable tendency to rest, their proper office is to close a period. The reader, therefore, must be satisfied with instances where this order is mixed with others.

Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,  
 When husbands, or when lapdogs, breathe their last.

Again:

Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,  
 And hew triumphal arches to the ground.

Again:

She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,  
 Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.

Again:

With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,  
 He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case.

And this suggests another experiment, which is, to set the different orders more directly in opposition, by giving examples where they are mixed in the same passage.



## First and second orders

Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,  
And op'd those eyes that must eclipse the day.

Again :

Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,  
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,  
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,  
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,  
Not Cynthia when her mantua's pinn'd awry,  
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
As thou, sad virgin ! for thy ravish'd hair.

## First and third.

Think what an equipage thou hast in air,  
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.

Again :

What guards the purity of melting maids,  
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,  
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,  
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark !

Again :

With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,  
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire ;  
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes,  
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize.

Again :

Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,  
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound,  
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,  
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day !

## Second and third.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms, the nymph he found,  
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.

Again :

On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,  
Which with a sigh she raised ; and thus she said.

Musing on the foregoing subject, I begin to doubt whether all this while I have been in a reverie, and whether the scene before me, full of objects new and singular, be not mere fairy-land. Is there any truth in the appearance, or is it wholly a work of imagination ? We cannot doubt of its reality ; and we may with assurance pronounce, that great is the merit of English heroic verse : for though uniformity prevails in the arrangement, in the equality of the lines, and in the resemblance of the final sounds ; variety is still more conspicuous in the pauses and in the accents, which are diversified in a surprising manner. Of the beauty that results from a due mixture of uniformity and variety,\* many instances have already occurred, but none more illustrious than English versification ; however rude it may be in the simplicity of its arrangement, it is highly melodious by its pauses and accents, so as already to rival the most perfect species known in Greece or Rome ; and it is no disagreeable prospect to find it susceptible of still greater refinement.

We proceed to blank verse, which has so many circumstances in

\* See Chap. 9.

common with rhyme, that its peculiarities may be brought within a narrow compass. With respect to form, it differs from rhyme in rejecting the jingle of similar sounds, which purifies it from a childish pleasure. But this improvement is a trifle compared with what follows. Our verse is extremely cramped by rhyme; and the peculiar advantage of blank verse is, that it is at liberty to attend the imagination in its boldest flights. Rhyme necessarily divides verse into couplets; each couplet makes a complete musical period, the parts of which are divided by pauses, and the whole summed up by a full close at the end: the melody begins anew with the next couplet: and in this manner a composition in rhyme proceeds couplet after couplet. I have often had occasion to mention the correspondence and concord that ought to subsist between sound and sense: from which it is a plain inference, that if a couplet be a complete period with regard to melody, it ought regularly to be the same with regard to sense. As it is extremely difficult to support such strictness of composition, licenses are indulged, as explained above; which, however, must be used with discretion, so as to preserve some degree of concord between the sense and the music: there ought never to be a full close in the sense but at the end of a couplet; and there ought always to be some pause in the sense at the end of every couplet: the same period as to sense may be extended through several couplets; but each couplet ought to contain a distinct member, distinguished by a pause in the sense as well as in the sound; and the whole ought to be closed with a complete cadence.\* Rules such as these, must confine rhyme within very narrow bounds: a thought of any extent, cannot be reduced within its compass: the sense must be curtailed and broken into parts, to make it square with the curtness of the melody; and beside, short periods afford no latitude for inversion.

I have examined this point with the stricter accuracy, in order to give a just notion of blank verse; and to show, that a slight difference in form may produce a great difference in substance. Blank verse has the same pauses and accents with rhyme, and a pause at the end of every line, like what concludes the first line of a couplet. In a word, the rules of melody in blank verse, are the same that obtain with respect to the first line of a couplet; but being disengaged from rhyme, or from couplets, there is access to make every line run into another, precisely as to make the first line of a couplet run into the second. There must be a musical pause at the end of every line; but this pause is so slight as not to require a pause in the sense: and accordingly the sense may be carried on with or without pauses, till a period of the utmost extent be completed by a full close both in the sense and the sound: there is no restraint, other than that this full close be at the end of a line; and this restraint is necessary, in order to preserve a coincidence between sense and

\* This rule is quite neglected in French versification. Even Boileau makes no difficulty, to close one subject with the first line of a couplet, and to begin a new subject with the second. Such license, however sanctioned by practice, is unpleasant by the discordance between the pauses of the sense and of the melody

sound, which ought to be aimed at in general, and is indispensable in the case of a full close, because it has a striking effect. Hence the fitness of blank verse for inversion: and consequently the lustre of its pauses and accents; for which, as observed above, there is greater scope in inversion, than when words run in their natural order.

In the second section of this chapter it is shown, that nothing contributes more than inversion to the force and elevation of language: the couplets of rhyme confine inversion within narrow limits; nor would the elevation of inversion, were there access for it in rhyme, readily accord with the humbler tone of that sort of verse. It is universally agreed, that the loftiness of Milton's style supports admirably the sublimity of his subject; and it is not less certain, that the loftiness of his style arises chiefly from inversion. Shakspeare deals little in inversion; but his blank verse being a sort of measured prose, is perfectly well adapted to the stage, where labored inversion is highly improper, because in dialogue it never can be natural.

Hitherto I have considered that superior power of expression which verse acquires by laying aside rhyme. But this is not the only ground for preferring blank verse: it has another preferable quality not less signal; and that is, a more extensive and more complete melody. Its music is not, like that of rhyme, confined to a single couplet; but takes in a great compass, so as in some measure to rival music properly so called. The interval between its cadences may be long or short at pleasure; and, by that means, its melody, with respect both to richness and variety, is superior far to that of rhyme, and superior even to that of the Greek and Latin Hexameter. Of this observation no person can doubt who is acquainted with the *Paradise Lost*: in which work there are indeed many careless lines; but at every turn the richest melody as well as the sublimest sentiments are conspicuous. Take the following specimen:

Now Morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime  
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl;  
 When Adam wak'd, so custom'd for his sleep  
 Was aëry light from pure digestion bred  
 And temp'rate vapors bland, which th' only sound  
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,  
 Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song  
 Of birds on every bough; so much the more  
 His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve  
 With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,  
 As through unquiet rest: he on his side  
 Leaning half-rai'd, with looks of cordial love  
 Hung over her enamor'd, and beheld  
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,  
 Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice  
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,  
 Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: Awake,  
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,  
 Heaven's last best gift, my ever-new delight,  
 Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field  
 Calls us: we lose the prime, to mark how spring

Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,  
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,  
 How nature paints her colors, how the bee  
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.

*Book V. l. 1.*

Comparing Latin Hexameter with English heroic rhyme, the former has obviously the advantage in the following particulars. It is greatly preferable as to arrangement, by the latitude it admits in placing the long and short syllables. Secondly, the length of an Hexameter line hath a majestic air: ours, by its shortness, is indeed more brisk and lively, but much less fitted for the sublime. And, thirdly, the long high-sounding words that Hexameter admits, add greatly to its majesty. To compensate these advantages, English rhyme possesses a greater number and greater variety both of pauses and of accents. These two sorts of verse stand indeed pretty much in opposition: in Hexameter, great variety of arrangement, none in the pauses nor accents; in English rhyme, great variety in the pauses and accents, very little in the arrangement.

In blank verse are united, in a good measure, the several properties of Latin Hexameter and English rhyme; and it possesses beside many signal properties of its own. It is not confined, like Hexameter, by a full close at the end of every line; nor, like rhyme, by a full close at the end of every couplet. Its construction, which admits the lines to run into each other, gives it a still greater majesty than arises from the length of an Hexameter line. By the same means, it admits inversion even beyond the Latin or Greek Hexameter; for these suffer some confinement by the regular closes at the end of every line. In its music it is illustrious above all: the melody of Hexameter verse is circumscribed to a line; and of English rhyme, to a couplet: the melody of blank verse is under no confinement, but enjoys the utmost privilege, of which melody of verse is susceptible; which is to run hand in hand with the sense. In a word, blank verse is superior to Hexameter in many articles; and inferior to it in none, save in the freedom of arrangement, and in the use of long words.

In French heroic verse, there are found, on the contrary, all the defects of Latin Hexameter and the English rhyme, without the beauties of either: subjected to the bondage of rhyme, and to the full close at the end of every couplet, it is also extremely fatiguing by uniformity in its pauses and accents: the line invariably is divided by the pause into two equal parts, and the accent is invariably placed before the pause.

*Jeune et vaillant héros || dont la haute sagesse  
 N'est point la fruit tardif || d'une lente vieillesse.*

Here every circumstance contributes to a tiresome uniformity: a constant return of the same pause and of the same accent, as well as an equal division of every line; which fatigue the ear without intermission or change. I cannot set this matter in a better light, than by presenting to the reader a French translation of the following passage of Milton:

*Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
 Godlike erect, with native honor clad,*

In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all :  
 And worthy seem'd ; for in their looks divine,  
 The image of their glorious Maker, shone  
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure ;  
 Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd ;  
 Whence true authority in men : though both  
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd ;  
 For contemplation he and valor form'd,  
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace ;  
 He for God only, she for God in him.

Were the pauses of the sense and sound in this passage but a little better assorted, nothing in verse could be more melodious. In general, the great defect in Milton's versification, in other respects admirable, is the want of coincidence between the pauses of the sense and sound. The translation is in the following words :

*Ce lieu délicieux, ce paradis charmant,  
 Reçoit de deux objets son plus bel ornement  
 Leur port majestueux, et leur démarche altière,  
 Semble leur mériter sur la nature entière  
 Ce droit de commander que Dieu leur a donné.  
 Sur leur auguste front de gloire couronné,  
 Du souverain du ciel brille la ressemblance :  
 Dans leurs simples regards éclate l'innocence,  
 L'adorable candeur, l'aimable vérité  
 La raison, la sagesse, et la sévérité  
 Qu'adoucit la prudence, et cet air de droiture  
 Du visage des rois respectable parure.  
 Ces deux objets divin n'ont pas les mêmes traits,  
 Ils paroissent formés, quoique tous deux parfaits ;  
 L'un pour la majesté, la force, et la noblesse ;  
 L'autre pour la douceur, la grace, et la tendresse ;  
 Celui-ci pour Dieu seul, l'autre pour l'homme encor.*

Here the sense is fairly translated, the words are of equal power, and yet how inferior the melody !

Many attempts have been made to introduce Hexameter verse into the living languages, but without success. The English language, I am inclined to think, is not susceptible of this melody : and my reasons are these. First, the polysyllables in Latin and Greek are finely diversified by long and short syllables, a circumstance that qualifies them for the melody of Hexameter verse : ours are extremely ill qualified for that service, because they superabound in short syllables. Secondly, the bulk of our monosyllables are arbitrary with regard to length, which is an unlucky circumstance in Hexameter : for although custom, as observed above, may render familiar a long or a short pronunciation of the same word, yet the mind wavering between the two sounds, cannot be so much affected with either, as with a word that has always the same sound ; and for that reason, arbitrary sounds are ill fitted for a melody which is chiefly supported by quantity. In Latin and Greek Hexameter, invariable sounds direct and ascertain the melody. English Hexameter would be destitute of melody, unless by artful pronunciation ; because of necessity the bulk of its sounds must be arbitrary. The pronunciation is easy in a simple movement of alternate long and short syllables ; but would be perplexing and unpleasant in the diversified movement of Hexameter verse.

Rhyme makes so great a figure in modern poetry, as to deserve a solemn trial. I have for that reason reserved it to be examined with deliberation; in order to discover, if I can, its peculiar beauties, and its degree of merit. The first view of this subject leads naturally to the following reflection: "That rhyme having no relation to sentiment, nor any effect upon the ear other than a mere jingle, ought to be banished all compositions of any dignity, as affording but a trifling and childish pleasure." It will also be observed, "That a jingle of words hath in some measure a ludicrous effect; witness the double rhymes of *Hudibras*, which contribute no small share to its drollery: that in a serious work this ludicrous effect would be equally remarkable, were it not obscured by the prevailing gravity of the subject: that having however a constant tendency to give a ludicrous air to the composition, more than ordinary fire is requisite to support the dignity of the sentiments against such an undermining antagonist."<sup>\*</sup>

These arguments are specious, and have undoubtedly some weight. Yet, on the other hand, it ought to be considered, that in modern tongues rhyme has become universal among men as well as children; and that it cannot have such a currency without some foundation in human nature. In fact, it has been successfully employed by poets of genius, in their serious and grave compositions, as well as in those which are more light and airy. Here in weighing authority against argument, the scales seem to be upon a level; and therefore, to come at any thing decisive, we must pierce a little deeper.

Music has great power over the soul; and may successfully be employed to inflame or soothe passions, if not actually to raise them. A single sound, however sweet, is not music; but a single sound repeated after intervals, may have the effect to rouse attention, and to keep the hearer awake: and a variety of similar sounds, succeeding each other after regular intervals, must have a still stronger effect. This consideration is applicable to rhyme, which connects two verse-lines by making them close with two words similar in sound. And considering attentively the musical effect of a couplet, we find, that it rouses the mind, and produces an emotion moderately gay without dignity or elevation: like the murmuring of a brook gliding through pebbles, it calms the mind when perturbed, and gently raises it when sunk. These effects are scarcely perceived when the whole poem is in rhyme; but are extremely remarkable by contrast, in the couplets that close the several acts of our later tragedies; the tone of the mind is sensibly varied by them, from anguish, distress, or melancholy, to some degree of ease and alacrity. For the truth of this observation, I appeal to the speech of Jane Shore in the fourth act, when her doom was pronounced by Glo'ster; to the speech of Lady Jane Gray at the end of the first act; and to that of Calista, in the *Fair Penitent*, when she leaves the stage, about the middle of the third act. The speech of Alicia, at the close of the fourth act of *Jane Shore*, puts the matter beyond doubt: in a

<sup>\*</sup> Vossius, *De Poematum Cantu*, p. 26. says, "Nihil seque gravitati orationis affici, quam in sono ludere syllabarum."

scene of deep distress, the rhymes which finish the act, produce a certain gayety and cheerfulness, far from according with the tone of the passion:

*Alicia.* For ever? Oh! For ever!  
 Oh! who can bear to be a wretch for ever!  
 My rival too! his last thoughts hung on her:  
 And, as he parted, left a blessing for her:  
 Shall she be bless'd, and I be curs'd, for ever!  
 No; since her fatal beauty was the cause  
 Of all my suff'rings, let her share my pains;  
 Let her, like me of ev'ry joy forlorn,  
 Devote the hour when such a wretch was born!  
 Like me to deserts and to darkness run,  
 Abhor the day, and curse the golden sun;  
 Cast ev'ry good and ev'ry hope behind;  
 Detest the works of nature, loathe mankind:  
 Like me with cries distracted fill the air,  
 Tear her poor bosom, and her frantic hair, }  
 And prove the torments of the last despair. }

Having described, in the best way I can, the impression that rhyme makes on the mind, I proceed to examine whether there be any subjects to which rhyme is peculiarly adapted, and for what subjects it is improper. Grand and lofty subjects, which have a powerful influence, claim precedence in this inquiry. In the chapter of Grandeur and Sublimity, it is established, that a grand or sublime object, inspires a warm enthusiastic emotion disdaining strict regularity and order; which emotion is very different from that inspired by the moderately enlivening music of rhyme. Supposing then an elevated subject to be expressed in rhyme, what must be the effect? The intimate union of the music with the subject, produces an intimate union of their emotions; one inspired by the subject, which tends to elevate and expand the mind; and one inspired by the music, which, confining the mind within the narrow limits of regular cadence and similar sound, tends to prevent all elevation above its own pitch. Emotions so little concordant, cannot in union have a happy effect.

But it is scarcely necessary to reason upon a case that never did, and probably never will happen, viz. an important subject clothed in rhyme, and yet supported in its utmost elevation. A happy thought or warm expression, may at times give a sudden bound upward; but it requires a genius greater than has hitherto existed, to support a poem of any length in a tone elevated much above that of the melody. Tasso and Ariosto ought not to be made exceptions, and still less Voltaire. And after all, where the poet has the dead weight of rhyme constantly to struggle with, how can we expect an uniform elevation in a high pitch; when such elevation, with all the support it can receive from language, requires the utmost effort of the human genius?

But now, admitting rhyme to be an unfit dress for grand and lofty images; it has one advantage however, which is, to raise a low subject to its own degree of elevation. Addison\* observes, "That rhyme, without any other assistance, throws the language off from prose, and very often makes an indifferent phrase pass unregarded; but

\* Spectator, No. 285.



where the verse is not built upon rhymes, there, pomp of sound, and energy of expression are indispensably necessary, to support the style, and keep it from falling into the flatness of prose." This effect of rhyme is remarkable in French verse: which, being simple, and little qualified for inversion, readily sinks down to prose where not artificially supported: rhyme is, therefore, indispensable in French tragedy, and may be proper even in French comedy. Voltaire\* assigns that very reason for adhering to rhyme in these compositions. He indeed candidly owns, that, even with the support of rhyme, the tragedies of his country are little better than conversation-pieces; which seems to infer, that the French language is weak, and an improper dress for any grand subject. Voltaire was sensible of the imperfection; and yet Voltaire attempted an epic poem in that language.

The cheering and enlivening power of rhyme, is still more remarkable in poems of short lines, where the rhymes return upon the ear in a quick succession; for which reason rhyme is perfectly well adapted to gay, light, and airy subjects. Witness the following:

O the pleasing, pleasing anguish,  
When we love and when we languish!  
Wishes rising,  
Thoughts surprising,  
Pleasure courting,  
Charms transporting,  
Fancy viewing,  
Joys ensuing,

O the pleasing, pleasing anguish! *Rosalind, Act I. Sc. 2*

For that reason, such frequent rhymes are very improper for any severe or serious passion: the dissonance between the subject and the melody is very sensibly felt. Witness the following:

Now under hanging mountains,  
Beside the fall of fountains,  
Or where Hebrus wanders,  
Rolling in meanders

All alone,  
Unheard, unknown,  
He makes his moan,  
And calls her ghost,  
For ever, ever, ever lost;  
Now with furies surrounded,  
Despairing, confounded,  
He trembles, he glows,  
Amidst Rodopé's snows.

*Pope, Ode for Music, l. 97.*

Rhyme is not less unfit for anguish or deep distress, than for subjects elevated and lofty; and for that reason has been long disused in the English and Italian tragedy. In a work where the subject is serious though not elevated, rhyme has not a good effect; because the airiness of the melody agrees not with the gravity of the subject: the *Essay on Man*, which treats a subject great and important, would make a better figure in blank verse. Sportive love, mirth, gayety, humor, and ridicule, are the province of rhyme. The boundaries assigned it by nature, were extended in barbarous and illiterate ages;

\* Preface to his *Oedipus*, and in his discourse upon tragedy, prefixed to the tragedy of *Brutus*.

and in its usurpations it has long been protected by custom: but taste in the fine arts, as well as in morals, improves daily; and makes a progress toward perfection, slow indeed but uniform; and there is no reason to doubt, that rhyme, in Britain, will in time be forced to abandon its unjust conquest, and to confine itself within its natural limits.

Having said what occurred upon rhyme, I close the section with a general observation, that the melody of verse so powerfully enchants the mind, as to draw a veil over very gross faults and imperfections. Of this power a stronger example cannot be given than the episode of Aristæus, which closes the fourth book of the *Georgics*. To renew a stock of bees when the former is lost, Virgil asserts, that they may be produced in the entrails of a bullock, slain and managed in a certain manner. This leads him to say, how this strange receipt was invented; which is as follows. Aristæus having lost his bees by disease and famine, never dreams of employing the ordinary means for obtaining a new stock; but, like a forward child, complains heavily to his mother Cyrene, a water-nymph. She advises him to consult Proteus, a sea-god, not how he was to obtain a new stock, but only by what fatality he had lost his former stock; adding, that violence was necessary, because Proteus would say nothing voluntarily. Aristæus, satisfied with this advice, though it gave him no prospect of repairing his loss, proceeds to execution. Proteus is caught sleeping, bound with cords, and compelled to speak. He declares, that Aristæus was punished with the loss of his bees, for attempting the chastity of Eurydice the wife of Orpheus; she having been stung to death by a serpent in flying his embraces. Proteus, whose sullenness ought to have been converted into wrath by the rough treatment he met with, becomes on a sudden courteous and communicative. He gives the whole history of the expedition to hell which Orpheus undertook in order to recover his spouse: a very entertaining story, but without the least relation to what was in view. Aristæus, returning to his mother, is advised to deprecate by sacrifices the wrath of Orpheus, who was now dead. A bullock is sacrificed, and out of the entrails spring miraculously a swarm of bees. Does it follow, that the same may be obtained without a miracle, as is supposed in the receipt?

#### A LIST of the different FEET, and of their NAMES.

1. **PHYRRHICUS**, consists of two short syllables. Examples, *Deus given, cannot, hillock, running.*
2. **SPONDEUS**, consists of two long syllables: *omnes, possess, forewarn, mankind, sometime.*
3. **IAMBUS**, composed of a short and a long: *pious, intent, degree, appear, consent, repent, demand, report, suspect, affront, event.*
4. **TROCHÆUS**, or **CHOREUS**, a long and short: *fervat, whereby after, legal, measure, burden, holy, lofty.*
5. **TRIBRACHYS**, three short: *melius, property.*
6. **MOLOSSUS**, three long: *delectant.*
7. **ANAPÆSTUS**, two short and a long: *animos, condescend, appro-*

*hend, overheard, acquiesce, immature, overcharge, serenade, opportune.*

8. DACTYLUS, a long and two short: *carmina, evident, excellence, estimate, wonderful, altitude, burdened, minister, tenement.*
9. BACCHIUS, a short and two long: *dolores.*
10. HYPOBACCHIUS or ANTIBACCHIUS, two long and a short. *pelluntur.*
11. CRETICUS, or AMPHIMACER, a short syllable between two long: *insito, afternoon*
12. AMPHIBRACHYS, a long syllable between two short: *honore, consider, imprudent, procedure, attended, proposed, respondent, concurrence, apprentice, respective, revenue.*
13. PROCELEUSMATICUS, four short syllables: *hominibus, necessary.*
14. DISPONDEUS, four long syllables: *infinitis.*
15. DIAMBUS, composed of two Iambi: *severitas.*
16. DITROCHÆUS, of two Trochæi: *permanere, procurator.*
17. IONICUS, two short syllables and two long: *properabant.*
18. Another foot passes under the same name, composed of two long syllables and two short: *calcaribus, possessory.*
19. CHORIAMBUS, two short syllables between two long: *nobilitas.*
20. ANTISPASTUS, two long syllables between two short: *Alexander.*
21. PÆON 1st, one long syllable and three short: *temporibus, ordinary, inventory, temperament.*
22. PÆON 2d, the second syllable long, and the other three short: *rapidity, solemnity, minority, considered, imprudently, extravagant, respectfully, accordingly.*
23. PÆON 3d, the third syllable long and the other three short: *animatus, independent, condescendence, sacerdotal, reimbursement, manufacture.*
24. PÆON 4th, the last syllable long and the other three short: *celeritas.*
25. EPITRITUS 1st, the first syllable short and the other three long: *voluptates.*
26. EPITRITUS 2d, the second syllable short and the other three long: *pœnitentes.*
27. EPITRITUS 3d, the third syllable short and the other three long: *discordias.*
28. EPITRITUS 4th, the last syllable short and the other three long: *fortunatus.*
29. A word of five syllables composed of a Pyrrhichius and Dactylus: *ministerial.*
30. A word of five syllables composed of a Trochæus and Dactylus: *singularity.*
31. A word of five syllables, composed of a Dactylus and Trochæus: *precipitation, examination.*
32. A word of five syllables, the second only long: *significancy.*
33. A word of six syllables composed of two Dactyles: *impetuosity.*
34. A word of six syllables composed of a Tribrachys and Dactylæ: *pusillanimity.*

*N. B.* Every word may be considered as a prose foot, because

every word is distinguished by a pause; and every foot in verse may be considered as a verse word, composed of syllables pronounced at once without a pause.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### COMPARISONS.

Comparisons serve to instruct and to please—They suggest some unusual contrast or resemblance—They set objects in their proper light—They associate them with other objects that are agreeable—They elevate objects—They depress them—Objects of different senses not to be compared—Things of the same kind not to be compared—Things of different kinds not to be contrasted—Abstract terms not the subject of comparison, unless personified—Two kinds of comparisons—Comparisons not proper for every occasion—Illustrated—Not disposed to pathetic flights, when cool and sedate, or when oppressed with care—Similes delightful, when the mind is elevated or animated by passion—The mind often in a tone to relish embellishing comparisons—The severe passions enemies to comparisons—A comparison faulty, though properly introduced—By being too faint—By being too low—By being too high—A comparison not to be drawn from a disagreeable object—Comparisons existing in words only, the most objectionable—A species of comparison that excites gayety.

COMPARISONS, as observed above,\* serve two purposes; when addressed to the understanding, their purpose is to instruct; when to the heart, their purpose is to please. Various means contribute to the latter; first, the suggesting of some unusual resemblance or contrast; second, the setting of an object in the strongest light; third, the associating of an object with others that are agreeable; fourth, the elevating of an object; and, fifth, the depressing of it. And that comparisons may give pleasure by these various means, appear from what is said in the chapter above cited; and will be made still more evident by examples, which shall be given after premising some general observations.

Objects of different senses cannot be compared together; for such objects, being entirely separated from each other, have no circumstance in common to admit either resemblance or contrast. Objects of hearing may be compared together, as also of taste, of smell, and of touch: but the chief fund of comparison are objects of sight; because, in writing or speaking, things can only be compared in idea, and the ideas of sight are more distinct and lively than those of any other sense.

When a nation emerging out of barbarity begins to think of the fine arts, the beauties of language cannot long lie concealed; and when discovered, they are generally, by the force of novelty, carried beyond moderation. Thus, in the early poems of every nation, we find metaphors and similes founded on slight and distant resemblances, which, losing their grace with their novelty, wear gradually out of repute; and now, by the improvement of taste, none but correct metaphors and similes are admitted into any polite composition.

\* Chap. 8.

To illustrate this observation, a specimen shall be given afterward of such metaphors as I have been describing; with respect to similes, take the following specimen:

Behold, thou art fair, my love: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead: thy teeth are like a flock of sheep from the washing, every one bearing twins: thy lips are like a thread of scarlet: thy neck like the tower of David built for an armory, whereon hang a thousand shields of mighty men: thy two breasts like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies: thy eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose like the tower of Lebanon, looking toward Damascus.

*Song of Solomon.*

Thou art like snow on the heath; thy hair like the mist of Cromla, when it curls on the rocks, and shines to the beam of the west: thy breasts are like two smooth rocks seen from Branno of the streams; thy arms like two white pillars in the hall of the mighty Fingal.

*Fingal.*

It has no good effect to compare things by way of simile that are of the same kind; nor to compare by contrast things of different kinds. The reason is given in the chapter quoted above; and the reason shall be illustrated by examples. The first is a comparison built upon a resemblance so obvious as to make little or no impression.

This just rebuke inflam'd the Lycian crew,  
They join, they thicken, and th' assault renew  
Unmov'd th' embody'd Greeks their fury dare,  
And fix'd support the weight of all the war;  
Nor could the Greeks repel the Lycian pow'rs,  
Nor the bold Lycians force the Grecian tow'rs.  
As on the confines of adjoining grounds,  
Two stubborn swains with blows dispute their bounds;  
They tug, they sweat; but neither gain, nor yield,  
One foot, one inch, of the contended field:  
Thus obstinate to death, they fight, they fall;  
Nor these can keep, nor those can win the wall.

*Iliad, XII. 505.*

Another, from Milton, lies open to the same objection. Speaking of the fallen angels searching for mines of gold,

A numerous brigade hasten'd: as when bands  
Of pioneers with spade and pick-ax arm'd,  
Forerun the royal camp to trench a field  
Or cast a rampart.

The next shall be of things contrasted that are of different kinds.

*Queen.* What, is my Richard both in shape and mind  
Transform'd and weak? Hath Bolingbroke depos'd  
Thine intellect? Hath he been in thy heart?  
The lion thrusteth forth his paw,  
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage  
To be o'erpower'd: and wilt thou, pupil-like,  
Take thy correction mildly, kiss the rod,  
And fawn on rage with base humility?

*Richard II. Act V. Sc. 1.*

This comparison has scarcely any force: a man and a lion are of different species, and therefore are proper subjects for a simile; but there is no such resemblance between them in general, as to produce any strong effect by contrasting particular attributes or circumstances.

A third general observation is, that abstract terms can never be

the subject of comparison, otherwise than by being personified. Shakspeare compares adversity to a toad, and slander to the bite of a crocodile; but in such comparisons these abstract terms must be imagined sensible beings.

To have a just notion of comparisons, they must be distinguished into two kinds; one common and familiar, as where a man is compared to a lion in courage, or to a horse in speed; the other more distant and refined, where two things that have in themselves no resemblance or opposition, are compared with respect to their effects. This sort of comparison is occasionally explained above;\* and for farther explanation take what follows. There is no resemblance between a flower-pot and a cheerful song; and yet they may be compared with respect to their effects, the emotions they produce being similar. There is as little resemblance between fraternal concord and precious ointment; and yet observe how successfully they are compared with respect to the impressions they make:

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon Aaron's beard, and descended to the skirts of his garment. *Psalm 133.*

For illustrating this sort of comparison, I add some more examples:

Delightful is thy presence, O Fingal! it is like the sun on Cromla, when the hunter mourns his absence for a season, and sees him between the clouds.

Did not Ossian hear a voice? or is it the sound of days that are no more? Often, like the evening sun, comes the memory of former times on my soul.

His countenance is settled from war; and is calm as the evening-beam, that from the cloud of the west looks on Cona's silent vale.

Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessammor.

The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.

Pleasant are the words of the song, said Cuchullin, and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the calm dew of the morning on the hill of roca, when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale.

These quotations are from the poems of Ossian, who abounds with comparisons of this delicate kind, and appears singularly happy in them.†

I proceed to illustrate by particular instances the different means by which comparisons, whether of the one sort or the other, can afford pleasure; and, in the order above established, I begin with such instances as are agreeable, by suggesting some unusual resemblance or contrast:

Sweet are the uses of Adversity,  
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in her head.

*As You Like It, Act II. Sc. 1.*

*Gardener.* Bolingbroke hath seized the wasteful King.  
What pity is't that he had not so trimm'd  
And dress'd his land, as we this garden dress,

\* Page 72.

† The nature and merit of Ossian's comparisons is fully illustrated, in a Dissertation on the poems of that Author, by Dr. Blair, Professor of Rhetoric in the College of Edinburgh; a delicious morsel of criticism.

And wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees;  
 Lest, being over proud with sap and blood,  
 With too much riches it confound itself.  
 Had he done so to great and growing men,  
 They might have liv'd to bear, and he to taste  
 Their fruits of duty. All superfluous branches  
 We lop away, that bearing boughs may live:  
 Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,  
 Which waste and idle hours have quite thrown down.

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 4.*

See, how the Morning opes her golden gates,  
 And takes her farewell of the glorious Sun;  
 How well resembles it the prime of youth,  
 Trimm'd like a younker prancing to his love!

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act II. Sc. 1.*

*Brutus.* O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb,  
 That carries anger as the flint bears fire:  
 Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,  
 And straight is cold again.

*Julius Caesar, Act IV. Sc. 3.*

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark  
 Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:  
 As when from mountain-tops, the dusky clouds  
 Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread  
 Heav'n's cheerful face, the lowering element  
 Scowls o'er the darken'd landscape, snow and show'r  
 If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet  
 Extends his ev'ning-beam, the fields revive,  
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds  
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

*Paradise Lost, Book 2.*

As the bright stars, and milky way,  
 Show'd by the night, are hid by day:  
 So we in that accomplish'd mind,  
 Help'd by the night, new graces find,  
 Which by the splendor of her view,  
 Dazzled before, we never knew.

*Waller.*

The last exertion of courage compared to the blaze of a lamp before extinguishing, *Tasso Gierusalem*, canto 19. st. 22.

None of the foregoing similes, as they appear to me, tend to illustrate the principal subject: and therefore the pleasure they afford must arise from suggesting resemblances that are not obvious: I mean the chief pleasure; for undoubtedly a beautiful subject introduced to form the simile affords a separate pleasure, which is felt in the similes mentioned, particularly in that cited from Milton.

The next effect of a comparison in the order mentioned, is to place an object in a strong point of view; which effect is remarkable in the following similes:

As when two scales are charg'd with doubtful loads,  
 From side to side the trembling balance nods,  
 (Whilst some laborious matron, just and poor,  
 With nice exactness weighs her woolly store,)  
 Till pois'd aloft, the resting beam suspends  
 Each equal weight; nor this nor that descends  
 So stood the war, till Hector's matchless might.  
 With fates prevailing, turn'd the scale of fight,  
 Fierce as a whirlwind up the wall he flies,  
 And fires his host with loud repeated cries.

*Iliad, b. XII 521.*



Ut flos in septis secretis nascitur hortis,  
 Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,  
 Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber,  
 Multi illum pueri, multæ cupiére puellæ;  
 Idem, cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,  
 Nulli illum pueri, nullæ cupiére puellæ:  
 Sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis; sed  
 Cum castum amisit, polluto corpore, florem,  
 Nec pueris jucunda manet, nec cara puellis. *Catullus.*

As the fair flower doth in the garden grow  
 Safe from the flock, and touched not by the plough,  
 Soothed by the wind and strengthened by the sun,  
 Nursed by the shower, sought for by every one,  
 But rudely plucked, its beauty doth expire,  
 Nor longer boys and girls the flower desire,  
 So is the untouched virgin very dear,  
 But virtue lost, she worthless doth appear.

The imitation of this beautiful simile by *Ariosto*, canto 1. st. 42. falls short of the original. It is also in part imitated by *Pope*.\*

*Lucetta.* I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,  
 But qualify the fire's extreme rage,  
 Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

*Julia.* The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns:  
 The current, that with gentle murmur glides,  
 Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;  
 But when his fair course is not hindered,  
 He makes sweet music with th' enamel'd stones,  
 Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
 He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:  
 And so by many winding nooks he strays  
 With willing sport to the wild ocean.  
 Then let me go, and hinder not my course:  
 I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,  
 And make a pastime of each weary step,  
 Till the last step have brought me to my love;  
 And there I'll rest, as, after much turmoil,  
 A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act II. Sc. 7.*

————— She never told her love;  
 But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
 Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought;  
 And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
 She sat like Patience on a monument,  
 Smiling at Grief.

*Twelfth-Night, Act II. Sc. 4.*

*York.* Then, as I said, the Duke, great Bolingbroke,  
 Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,  
 Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,  
 With slow but stately pace, kept on his course:  
 While all tongues cry'd, God save thee, Bolingbroke.

*Dutchess.* Alas! poor Richard, where rides he the while!

*York.* As in a theatre, the eyes of men,  
 After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,  
 Are idly bent on him that enters next,  
 Thinking his prattle to be tedious:  
 Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes  
 Did scowl on Richard; no man cry'd, God save him:  
 No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;  
 But dust was thrown upon his sacred head:  
 Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,

\* *Dunciad*, b. IV. l. 405

His face still combating with tears and smiles,  
The badges of his grief and patience;  
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd  
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,  
And barbarism itself have pited him.

*Richard II. Act V. Sc. 2.*

*Northumberland.* How doth my son and brother?  
Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.  
Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless  
So dull, so dead in look, so wo-be-gone,  
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,  
And would have told him, half his Troy was burn'd:  
But Priam found the fire, ere he his tongue:  
And I my Percy's death, ere thou report'st it.

*Second Part, Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 1.*

Why, then I do but dream on sov'reignty,  
Like one that stands upon a promontory,  
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,  
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,  
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,  
Saying, he'll lave it dry to have his way:  
So do I wish, the crown being so far off,  
And so I chide the means that keep me from it,  
And so (I say) I'll cut the causes off,  
Flatt'ring my mind with things impossible.

*Third Part, Henry VI. Act III. Sc. 2.*

—————Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more.

*Macbeth, Act V. Sc. 5.*

O thou Goddess,  
Thou divine Nature! how thyself thou blazon'st  
In these two princely boys! they are as gentle  
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,  
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,  
(Their royal blood inchaf'd) as the rudest wind,  
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,  
And make him stoop to th' vale.

*Cymbeline, Act IV. Sc. 2.*

Why did not I pass away in secret, like the flower of the rock that lifts its fair head unseen, and strows its withered leaves on the blast? *Fingal.*

There is a joy in grief when peace dwells with the sorrowful. But they are wasted with mourning, O daughter of Toscar, and their days are few. They fall away like the flower on which the sun looks in his strength, after the mildew has passed over it, and its head is heavy with the drops of night. *Fingal.*

The sight obtained of the city of Jerusalem by the Christian army, compared to that of land discovered after a long voyage, Tasso's *Gierusalem, canto 3. st. 4.* The fury of Rinaldo subsiding when not opposed, to that of wind or water when it has a free passage, *canto 20. st. 58.*

As words convey but a faint and obscure notion of great numbers, a poet, to give a lively notion of the object he describes with regard to number, does well to compare it to what is familiar and commonly known. Thus Homer\* compares the Grecian army in point of

\* Book II. l. 111.

number to a swarm of bees: in another passage\* he compares it to that profusion of leaves and flowers which appear in the spring, or of insects in a summer's evening: and Milton,

—————As when the potent rod  
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,  
Wav'd round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,  
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:  
So numberless were those bad angels seen,  
Hovering on wing under the cope of hell,  
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires.

*Paradise Lost, B. I.*

Such comparisons have, by some writers,† been condemned for the lowness of the images introduced: but surely without reason; for, with regard to numbers, they put the principal subject in a strong light.

The foregoing comparisons operate by resemblance; others have the same effect by contrast.

*York.* I am the last of noble Edward's sons,  
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first;  
In war, was never lion rag'd more fierce;  
In peace, was never gentle lamb more mild;  
Than was that young and princely gentleman.  
His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,  
Accomplished with the number of thy hours.  
But when he frown'd it was against the French,  
And not against his friends. His noble hand  
Did win what he did spend; and spent not that  
Which his triumphant father's hand had won.  
His hands were guilty of no kindred's blood,  
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.  
Oh, Richard! York is too far gone with grief,  
Or else he never would compare between.

*Richard II. Act II. Sc. 1.*

Milton has a peculiar talent in embellishing the principal subject by associating it with others that are agreeable; which is the third end of a comparison. Similes of this kind have, beside, a separate effect: they diversify the narration by new images that are not strictly necessary to the comparison: they are short episodes, which, without drawing us from the principal subject, afford great delight by their beauty and variety:

He scarce had ceas'd, when the superior fiend  
Was moving toward the shore; his pond'rous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At ev'ning from the top of Fesol6,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.

*Milton, B. I.*

—————Thus far these, beyond  
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observ'd  
Their dread commander. He, above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,

\* Book II. l. 551.

† See *Vidas Poetic*. lib. II. 282.

Stood like a tow'r ; his form had yet not lost  
 All her original brightness, nor appear'd  
 Less than archangel ruin'd and th' excess  
 Of glory obscur'd : as when the sun new-risen  
 Looks through the horizontal misty air  
 Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon  
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilights sheds  
 On half the nations, and with fear of change  
 Perplexes monarchs.

*Milton, B. I.*

As when a vulture on Imaus bred,  
 Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,  
 Dislodging from a region scarce of prey  
 To gorge the flesh of lambs, or yeanling kids,  
 On hills where flocks are fed, flie towards the springs  
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,  
 But in his way lights on the barren plains  
 Of Sericana, where Chineses drive  
 With sails and wind their cany wagons light :  
 So on this windy sea of land, the fiend  
 Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey.

*Milton, B. III*

————— Yet higher than their tops  
 The verdurous wall of paradise up sprung :  
 Which to our general sire gave prospect large  
 Into this nether empire neighboring round.  
 And higher than that wall, a circling row  
 Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit,  
 Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,  
 Appear'd, with gay enamel'd colours mix'd,  
 On which the sun more glad impress'd his beams  
 Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,  
 When God had show'r'd the earth ; so lovely seem'd  
 That landscape : and of pure now purer air  
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires  
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive  
 All sadness but despair ; now gentle gales  
 Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
 Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
 Sabean odour from the spicy shore  
 Of Araby the blest ; with such delay  
 Well-pleas'd they slack their course, and many a league  
 Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.

*Milton, B. IV.*

With regard to similes of this kind, it will readily occur to the reader, that when a resembling subject is once properly introduced in a simile, the mind is transitorily amused with the new object, and is not dissatisfied with the slight interruption. Thus, in fine weather, the momentary excursions of a traveller for agreeable prospects or elegant buildings, cheer his mind, relieve him from the languor of uniformity, and without much lengthening his journey, in reality, shorten it greatly in appearance.

Next of comparisons that aggrandize or elevate. These affect us more than any other sort : the reason of which may be gathered from the chapter of Grandeur and Sublimity ; and, without reasoning, will be evident from the following instances.

As when a flame the winding valley fills,  
 And runs on crackling shrubs between the hills,

Then o'er the stubble, up the mountain flies,  
 Fires the high woods, and blazes to the skies,  
 This way and that, the spreading torrent roars;  
 So sweeps the hero through the wasted shores.  
 Around him wide, immense destruction pours,  
 And earth is delug'd with the sanguine show'rs.

*Iliad*, XX. 569.

Through blood, through death, Achilles still proceeds,  
 O'er slaughtered heroes, and o'er rolling steeds.  
 As when avenging flames with fury driv'n  
 On guilty towns exert the wrath of Heav'n,  
 The pale inhabitants, some fall, some fly,  
 And the red vapors purple all the sky:  
 So raged Achilles; Death and dire dismay,  
 And toils, and terrors, filled the dreadful day.

*Iliad*, XXI. 605.

Methinks, King Richard and myself should meet  
 With no less terror than the elements  
 Of fire and water, when their thund'ring shock,  
 At meeting, tears the cloudy cheeks of heav'n.

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 3.*

As rusheth a foamy stream from the dark shady steep of Cromla, when thunder  
 is rolling above, and dark brown night rests on the hill: so fierce, so vast, so ter-  
 rible, rush forward the sons of Erin. The chief, like a whale of Ocean followed  
 by all its billows, pours valor forth as a stream, rolling its might along the shore.

*Fingal*, b. I.

As roll a thousand waves to a rock, so Swaran's host came on; as meets a rock  
 a thousand waves, so Inisfail met Swaran.

*Ibid.*

I beg peculiar attention to the following simile for a reason that  
 shall be mentioned:

Thus breathing death, in terrible array,  
 The close compacted legions urg'd their way:  
 Fierce they drove on, impatient to destroy;  
 Troy charg'd the first, and Hector first of Troy  
 As from some mountain's craggy forehead torn,  
 A rock's round fragment flies with fury borne,  
 (Which from the stubborn stone a torrent rends)  
 Precipitate the pond'rous mass descends;  
 From steep to steep the rolling ruin bounds;  
 At every shock the crackling wood resounds;  
 Still gath'ring force, it smokes; and urg'd amain,  
 Whirls, leaps, and thunders down, impetuous to the plain:  
 There stops—So Hector. Their whole force he prov'd:  
 Resistless when he rag'd; and when he stopt, unmov'd.

*Iliad*, XIII. 187.

The image of a falling rock is certainly not elevating;\* and yet  
 undoubtedly the foregoing simile fires and swells the mind: it is  
 grand therefore, if not sublime. And the following simile will  
 afford additional evidence, that there is a real, though nice, distinc-  
 tion between these two feelings:

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,  
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell  
 On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,  
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield  
 Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge  
 He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee  
 His massy spear upstaid; as if on earth

\* See Chap. IV.

Winds under ground or waters forcing way,  
Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat  
Half-sunk with all his pines.

*Milton, b. VI.*

A comparison by contrast may contribute to grandeur or elevation, no less than by resemblance; of which the following comparison of Lucan is a remarkable instance:

*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.\**

Considering that the Heathen deities possessed a rank but one degree above that of mankind, I think it would not be easy, by a single expression, to exalt more one of the human species, than is done in this comparison. I am sensible, at the same time, that such a comparison among Christians, who entertain more exalted notions of the Deity, would justly be reckoned extravagant and absurd.

The last article mentioned, is that of lessening or depressing a hated or disagreeable object; which is effectually done by resembling it to any thing low or despicable. Thus Milton, in his description of the rout of the rebel-angels, happily expresses their terror and dismay in the following simile:

—————As a herd  
Of goats or timorous flock together throng'd,  
Drove them before him thunder-struck, pursu'd  
With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
And crystal wall of heav'n, which op'ning wide,  
Roll'd inward, and a spacious gap disclos'd  
Into the wasteful deep: the monstrous sight  
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse  
Urg'd them behind; headlong themselves they threw  
Down from the verge of heav'n.

*Milton, b. VI.*

In the same view, Homer, I think, may be justified in comparing the shouts of the Trojans in battle to the noise of cranes,† and to the bleating of a flock of sheep:‡ it is no objection that these are low images; for it was his intention to lessen the Trojans by opposing their noisy march to the silent and manly march of the Greeks. Addison,§ describing the figure that men make in the sight of a superior being, takes opportunity to mortify their pride by comparing them to a swarm of pismires.

A comparison that has none of the good effects mentioned in this discourse, but is built upon common and trifling circumstances, makes a mighty silly figure:

*Non sum nescius, grandia consilia a multis plerumque causis, ceu magna navigia a plurimis remis, impelli.||*

*Strada, de bello Belgico.*

By this time, I imagine the different purposes of comparison, and the various impressions it makes on the mind, are sufficiently illustrated by proper examples. This was an easy task. It is more difficult to lay down rules about the propriety or impropriety of

\* The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the vanquished, Cato.

† Beginning of book III.

‡ Book IV. l. 498.

§ Guardian, No. 153.

|| I am not ignorant that great designs are impelled by many causes, as are great ships by many oars.

comparison; in what circumstances they may be introduced, and in what circumstances they are out of place. It is evident that a comparison is not proper on every occasion: a man when cool and sedate, is not disposed to poetical flights, nor to sacrifice truth and reality to imaginary beauties: far less is he so disposed when oppressed with care, or interested in some important transaction that engrosses him totally. On the other hand, a man, when elevated or animated by passion, is disposed to elevate or animate all his objects: he avoids familiar names, exalts objects by circumlocution and metaphor, and gives even life and voluntary action to inanimate beings. In this heat of mind, the highest poetical flights are indulged, and the boldest similes and metaphors relished.\* But without soaring so high, the mind is frequently in a tone to relish chaste and moderate ornament; such as comparisons that set the principal object in a strong point of view, or that embellish and diversify the narration. In general, when by any animating passion, whether pleasant or painful, an impulse is given to the imagination; we are in that condition disposed to every sort of figurative expression, and in particular to comparisons. This in a great measure is evident from the comparisons already mentioned; and shall be farther illustrated by other instances. Love, for example, in its infancy, rousing the imagination, prompts the heart to display itself in figurative language, and in similes:

*Troilus.* Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,  
What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?  
Her bed is, India; there she lies, a pearl:  
Between our Ilium, and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood;  
Ourself the merchant; and the sailing Pandar  
Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

*Troilus and Cressida, Act I. Sc. 1.*

Again:

Come, gentle Night; come, loving black-brow'd Night!  
Give me my Romeo; and when he shall die,  
Take him, and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heav'n so fine,  
That all the world shall be in love with Night,  
And pay no worship to the garish Sun.

*Romeo and Juliet, Act III. Sc. 2.*

The dread of a misfortune, however imminent, involving always some doubt and uncertainty, agitates the mind and excites the imagination;

*Wolsey.*———Nay, then, farewell:  
I've touch'd the highest point of all my greatness,  
And from that full meridian of my glory  
I haste now to my setting. I shall fall,  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more.

*Henry VIII. Act III. Sc. 2.*

But it will be a better illustration of the present head, to give examples where comparisons are improperly introduced. I have had already occasion to observe, that similes are not the language

\* It is accordingly observed by Longinus, in his Treatise of the Sublime, that the proper time for metaphor, is when the passions are so swelled as to hurry on like a torrent.



of a man in his ordinary state of mind, dispatching his daily and usual work. For that reason, the following speech of a gardener to his servants, is extremely improper :

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricots,  
Which, like unruly children, make their sire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight :  
Give some supportance to the bending twigs,  
Go thou ; and like an executioner,  
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays,  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth ;  
All must be even in our government.

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 4.*

The fertility of Shakspeare's vein betrays him frequently into this error. There is the same impropriety in another simile of his :

*Hero.* Good Margaret, run thee into the parlor ;  
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice ;  
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula  
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse  
Is all of her ; say that thou overheard'st us :  
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,  
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter ; like to favorites,  
Made proud by princes that advance their pride  
Against that power that bred it.

*Much Ado about Nothing, Act III. Sc. 1.*

Rooted grief, deep anguish, terror, remorse, despair, and all the sevrer dispiriting passions, are declared enemies, perhaps not to figurative language in general, but undoubtedly to the pomp and solemnity of comparison. Upon that account, the simile pronounced by young Rutland, under terror of death from an inveterate enemy, and praying mercy, is unnatural :

So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch  
That trembles under his devouring paws ;  
And so he walks insulting o'er his prey,  
And so he comes to rend his limbs asunder.  
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,  
And not with such a cruel threat'ning look.

*Third Part Henry VI. Act I. Sc. 3.*

Nothing appears more out of place, nor more awkwardly introduced, than the following simile :

*Lucia.* ————— Farewell, my Portius,  
Farewell, though death is in the word, *for-ever* !  
*Portius.* Stay, Lucia, stay ; what dost thou say ? *for-ever* ?  
*Lucia.* Have I not sworn ? If, Portius, thy success  
Must throw thy brother on his fate, farewell.  
Oh, how shall I repeat the word, *for-ever* ?  
*Portius.* Thus, o'er the dying lamp th' unsteady flame  
Hangs quivering on a point, leaps off by fits,  
And falls again, as loath to quit its hold.\*  
—Thou must not go, my soul still hovers o'er thee,  
And can't get loose.

*Cato, Act III. Sc. 2.*

Nor does the simile which closes the first act of the same tragedy make a better appearance ; the situation there represented being too

\* This simile would have a fine effect pronounced by the chorus in a Greek tragedy.

dispiriting for a simile. A simile is improper for one who dreads the discovery of a secret machination:

*Zara.* The mute not yet return'd! Ha! 'twas the King,  
The King that parted hence! frowning he went;  
His eyes like meteors roll'd, then darted down  
Their red and angry beams; as if his sight  
Would, like the raging Dog-star, scorch the earth,  
And kindle ruin in its course.

*Mourning Bride, Act V. Sc. 3.*

A man spent and dispirited after losing a battle, is not disposed to heighten or illustrate his discourse by similes:

*York.* With this we charg'd again; but out, alas!  
We bodg'd again; as I have seen a swan  
With bootless labor swim against the tide,  
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.  
Ah! hark, the fatal followers do pursue;  
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury.  
The sands are number'd that make up my life;  
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

*Third Part Henry VI. Act I. Sc. 4.*

Far less is a man disposed to similes who is not only defeated in a pitched battle, but lies at the point of death mortally wounded:

*Warwick.* —————My mangled body shows  
My blood, my want of strength; my sick heart shows  
That I must yield my body to the earth,  
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.  
Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,  
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle;  
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,  
Whose top-branch over-peer'd Jove's spreading tree,  
And kept low shrubs from winter's pow'ful wind.

*Third Part Henry VI. Act V. Sc. 2.*

Queen Katherine, deserted by the King, and in the deepest affliction on her divorce, could not be disposed to any sallies of imagination: and for that reason, the following simile, however beautiful in the mouth of a spectator, is scarcely proper in her own.

I am the most unhappy woman living,  
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,  
No friends, no hope! no kindred weep for me!  
Almost no grave allow'd me! like the lily,  
That once was mistress of the field, and flourish'd,  
I'll hang my head, and perish.

*King Henry VIII. Act III. Sc. 1.*

Similes thus unseasonably introduced, are finely ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*.

*Bayes.* Now here she must make a simile.

*Smith.* Where's the necessity of that, Mr. Bayes?

*Bayes.* Because she's surprised; that's a general rule; you must ever make a simile when you are surprised; 'tis a new way of writing.

A comparison is not always faultless, even where it is properly introduced. I have endeavored above to give a general view of the different ends to which a comparison may contribute: a comparison, like other human productions, may fall short of its aim; of which defect instances are not rare even among good writers; and to com-

plete the present subject, it will be necessary to make some observations upon such faulty comparisons. I begin with observing, that nothing can be more erroneous than to institute a comparison too faint: a distant resemblance or contrast fatigues the mind with its obscurity, instead of amusing it: and tends not to fulfil any one end of a comparison. The following similes seem to labor under this defect.

Albus ut obscuro deterget nubila cœlo  
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres  
Perpetuos: sic tu sapiens finire memento  
Tristitiam, vitæque labores,  
Molli, Plance, mero.

*Horat. Carm. L. I. ode 7.*

As the white south at times serenest the skies,  
Nor are his gathering showers for ever rise.  
So thou, oh Plancus, 'gainst thy cares be wise;  
With mellow wine dismiss the toils of life.

———— Medio dux agmine Turnus  
Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est.  
Ceus septem surgens sedatis aninibus altus  
Per tacitum Ganges: aut pingui flumine Nilus  
Cum refluit campis, et jam se condidit alveo.

*Æneid, IX. 22.*

In the main battle, with his flaming crest,  
The mighty Turnus towers above the rest—  
Silent they move, majestically slow,  
Like ebbing Nile, or Ganges in his flow.

Talibus orabat, talesque miserrima fletus  
Fertque refertque soror: sed nullis ille movetur  
Fletibus, aut voces ullas tractabilis audit.  
Fata obstant: placidasque viri Deus obstruit aures.  
Ac veluti annoso validam cum robore quercum  
Alpini Boreæ, nunc hinc, nunc flatibus illinc  
Eruere inter se certant; it stridor, et alte  
Consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes:  
Ipsa hæret scopulis: et quantum vertice ad auras  
Æthereas, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.  
Haud secus assiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros  
Tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas:  
Mens immota manet, lacrymæ volvuntur inanes.

*Æneid, I. 421*

This mournful message pious Anna bears  
And seconds, with her own, her sister's tears;  
But all her arts are still employed in vain,  
Again she comes, and is refused again.  
His hardened heart, nor prayers nor threatnings move,  
Fate and the Gods had stopped his ears to love.  
As when the winds their airy quarrel try  
Justling from every quarter of the sky,  
This way and that the mountain oak they bend,  
His boughs they shatter, and his branches rend,  
With leaves and falling masts they spread the ground  
The hollow vallies echo to the sound:  
Unmoved the royal plant their fury mocks,  
Or, shaken, clings more closely to the rocks:  
Far as he shoots his towering head on high,  
So deep in earth his fix'd foundations lie.  
No less a storm the Trojan hero bears,  
Thick messages and loud complaints he hears,  
And bandied words still beating on his ears.

Sighs, groans, and tears, proclaim his inward pains,  
But the firm purpose of his heart remains.

*K. Rich.* Give me the crown.—Here, Cousin, seize the crown,  
Here, on this side, my hand: on that side, thine.  
Now is this golden crown like a deep well,  
That owes two buckets, filling one another;  
The emptier ever dancing in the air,  
The other down, unseen and full of water:  
That bucket down, and full of tears, am I,  
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

*Richard II. Act IV. Sc. 1.*

*K. John.* Oh! Cousin, thou art come to set mine eye;  
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burnt;  
And all the shrowds wherewith my life should sail,  
Are turned to one thread, one little hair:  
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,  
Which holds but till thy news be uttered.

*King John, Act V. Sc. 7.*

*York.* My uncles both are slain in rescuing me:  
And all my followers, to the eager foe  
Turn back, and fly like ships before the wind,  
Or lambs pursu'd by hunger-starved wolves.

*Third Part, Henry VI. Act I. Sc. 4.*

The latter of the two similes is good: the former, by its faintness of resemblance, has no effect but to load the narration with an useless image.

The next error I shall mention is a capital one. In an epic poem, or in a poem upon any elevated subject, a writer ought to avoid raising a simile on a low image, which never fails to bring down the principal subject. In general, it is a rule, that a grand object ought never to be resembled to one that is diminutive, however delicate the resemblance may be; for it is the peculiar character of a grand object to fix the attention, and swell the mind; in which state, to contract it to a minute object, is unpleasant. The resembling of an object to one that is greater, has, on the contrary, a good effect, by raising or swelling the mind: for one passes with satisfaction from a small to a great object; but cannot be drawn down, without reluctance, from great to small. Hence the following similes are faulty:

Meanwhile the troops beneath Patroclus' care,  
Invade the Trojans, and commence the war.  
As wasps, provok'd by children in their play,  
Pour from their mansions by the broad highway,  
In swarms the guiltless traveller engage,  
Whet all their stings, and call forth all their rage  
All rise in arms, and with a general cry  
Assert their waxen domes, and buzzing progeny:  
Thus from the tents the fervent legion swarms,  
So loud their clamors, and so keen their arms.

*Iliad, XVI. 312.*

So burns the vengeful hornet (soul all o'er)  
Repuls'd in vain, and thirsty still of gore;  
(Bold son of air and heat) on angry wings  
Untam'd, untir'd, he turns, attacks, and stings.  
Fir'd with like ardor fierce Atrides flew,  
And sent his soul with ev'ry lance he threw.

*Iliad, XVII. 642.*

Instant ardentes Tyrii: pars ducere muros,  
 Molirique arcem, et manibus subvolvere saxa:  
 Pars aptare locum tecto, et concludere sulco.  
 Jura magistratusque legunt, sanctumque senatum.  
 Hic portus alii effodiunt: hic alta theatris  
 Fundamenta locant alii, immanesque columnas  
 Rupibus excidunt, scenis decora alta futura.  
 Qualis apes æstate nova per florea rura  
 Exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos  
 Educunt fœtus, aut cum liquentia mella  
 Stipant, et dulci distendunt nectare cellas,  
 Aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto  
 Ignavum fucos pecus a præsepibus arcent.  
 Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella.

*Æneid, l. 427.*

The toiling Tyrians on each other call,  
 To ply their labor; some extend the wall;  
 Some build the citadel; the brawny thong  
 Or dig or push unwieldy stones along.  
 Some for their dwelling choose a spot of ground,  
 Which, first design'd, with ditches they surround.  
 Some laws ordain—and some attend the choice  
 Of holy senate, and elect by voice.  
 Here, some design a mole, while others there  
 Lay deep foundations for a theatre,  
 From marble quarries mighty columns hew  
 For ornaments of scenes and future view.  
 Such is their toil, and such their busy pains,  
 As exercise the bees in flowery plains,  
 When winter past, and summer scarce begun,  
 Invites them forth to labor in the sun:  
 Some lead their youth abroad, while some condense  
 Their liquid store, and some in cells dispense:  
 Some at the gate stand ready to receive  
 The golden burden, and their friends relieve:  
 All with united force combine to drive  
 The lazy drones from the laborious hive.  
 With envy stung they view each other's deeds;  
 The fragrant work with diligence proceeds.

To describe bees gathering honey as resembling the builders of Carthage, would have a much better effect.\*

Tum vero Teucri incumbunt, et littore celsas  
 Deducunt toto naves: natat uncta carina;  
 Frondentesque ferunt remos, et robora sylvis  
 Infabricata, fugæ studio.  
 Migrantes cernas, totaque ex urbe ruentes.  
 Ac veluti ingentem formicæ farris acervum  
 Cum populant, hyemis memores, tectoque reponunt:  
 It nigrum campis agmen, prædamque per herbas  
 Convectant calle angusto: pars grandia trudent  
 Obnixæ frumenta humeris: pars agmina cogunt,  
 Castigantque moras: opere omnis semita fervet.

*Æneid, IV. 397.*

————— They with early care  
 Unmoor their vessels, and for sea prepare.  
 The fleet is soon afloat, in all its pride;  
 And well caulked galleys in the harbor ride.  
 Then oaks for oars they felled; or, as they stood,  
 Of its green arms despoiled the growing wood,

\* And accordingly Demetrius Phalerius (of Elocution, sect. 85.) observes, that it has a better effect to compare small things to great than great things to small.

Studious of flight. The beach is covered o'er  
 With Trojan bands that blacken all the shore  
 On every side are seen, descending down,  
 Thick swarms of soldiers, loaden from the town.  
 Thus, in battalia, march embodied ants,  
 Fearless of winter, and of future wants—  
 T'invade the corn, and to their cells convey  
 The plundered forage of their yellow prey.  
 The sable troops, along the narrow tracks,  
 Scarce bear the weighty burden on their backs.  
 Some set their shoulders to the pond'rous grain;  
 Some guard the spoil, some lash the lagging train:  
 All ply their several tasks, and equal toil sustain.

The following simile has not any one beauty to recommend it.  
 The subject is Amata, the wife of King Latinus.

Tum vero infelix, ingentibus excita monstribus,  
 Immensam sine more furit lymphata per urbem:  
 Ceu quondam torto volitans sub verbera turbo,  
 Quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum  
 Intenti ludo exercent. Ille actus habena  
 Curvatis fertur spatiis: stupet inscia turba,  
 Impubesque manus, mirata volubile buxum;  
 Dant animos plagæ. Non cursu segnior illo  
 Per medias urbes agitur, populosque feroces.

*Æneid, VII. 376.*

She flew to rage; for now the snake possess'd  
 Her vital parts, and poisoned all her breast.  
 She raves—she runs with a distracted pace,  
 And fills, with horrid howls, the public place.  
 And, as young striplings whip the top for sport,  
 On the smooth pavement of an empty court;  
 The wooden engine flies and whirls about,  
 Admired, with clamors, of the beardless rout:  
 They lash aloud—each other they provoke,  
 And lend their little souls at every stroke:  
 Thus fares the queen; and thus her fury blows  
 Amidst the crowd, and kindles as she goes.

This simile seems to border upon the burlesque.

An error, opposite to the former, is the introducing of a resembling image, so elevated or great as to bear no proportion to the principal subject. Their remarkable disparity, seizing the mind, never fails to depress the principal subject by contrast, instead of raising it by resemblance: and if the disparity be very great, the simile degenerates into burlesque; nothing being more ridiculous than to force an object out of its proper rank in nature, by equalling it with one greatly superior or greatly inferior. This will be evident, from the following comparisons.

Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella.  
 Ac veluti lentis Cyclopes fulmina massis  
 Cum properant: alii taurinis follibus auras  
 Accipiunt, redduntque: alii stridentia tingunt  
 Æra lacu; gemit impositis incudibus Ætna:  
 Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt  
 In numerum; versantque tenaci forcipe ferrum.  
 Non aliter (si parva licet componere magnis)  
 Cecropias innatus apes amor urget habendi,  
 Munere quamque suo. Grandævis oppida curæ,  
 Et munire favos, et Dædala fingere tecta.

At fœces multâ referunt se nocte minores,  
 Crura thymo plenas: pascuntur et arbuta passim,  
 Et glaucas salices, casiamque crocumque rubentem,  
 Et pinguem tiliam, et ferrugineos hyacinthos.  
 Omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus unus.

*Georgic. IV. 169.*

With diligence the fragrant work proceeds,  
 As when the Cyclopes, at th' almighty nod,  
 New thunder hasten for their angry god,  
 Subdued in fire the stubborn metal lies;  
 One brawny smith the puffing bellows plies,  
 And draws and blows reciprocating air;  
 Others to quench the hissing mass prepare;  
 With lifted arms they order every blow,  
 And chime their sounding hammers in a row,  
 With labored anvils Ætna groans below.  
 Strongly they strike, huge flakes of flames expire,  
 With tongs they turn the steel, and vex it in the fire.  
 If little things with great we may compare,  
 Such are the bees, and such their busy care,  
 Studious of honey, each in his degree—  
 The youthful swain, the grave experienced bee—  
 That, in the field, this, in affairs of state,  
 Employed at home, abides within the gate,  
 To fortify the combs, to build the wall,  
 To prop the ruins lest the fabric fall:  
 But, late at night, with weary pinions come  
 The laboring youth, and heavy-laden home.  
 Plains, meads, and orchards, all the day he plies,  
 The gleans of yellow thyme distend his thighs:  
 He spoils the saffron flowers, he sips the blues  
 Of violets, wilding blooms, and willow dews.  
 Their toil is common, common is their sleep.

The Cyclopes make a better figure in the following simile:

————— The Thracian leader prest,  
 With eager courage, far before the rest;  
 Him Ajax met, inflam'd with equal rage:  
 Between the wond'ring hosts the chiefs engage;  
 Their weighty weapons round their heads they throw,  
 And swift, and heavy, falls each thund'ring blow.  
 As when in Ætna's caves the giant brood,  
 The one-eyed servants of the Lemnian god,  
 In order round the burning anvil stand,  
 And forge, with weighty strokes, the forked brand  
 The shaking hills their servid toils confess,  
 And echoes rattling through each dark recess:  
 So rag'd the fight.

*Epigoniad, B. 6.*

Tum Bitian ardentem oculis animisque frementem;  
 Non jaculo, neque enim jaculo vitam ille dedisset;  
 Sed magnum stridens contorta salarica venit  
 Fulminis acta modo, quam nec duo taurea terga,  
 Nec duplici squama lorica fidelis et auro  
 Sustinuit: collapsa ruunt immania membra:  
 Dat tellus gemitum, et clypeum super intonat ingens.  
 Qualis in Euboico Baiarum litore quondam  
 Saxea pila cadit, magnis quam molibus ante  
 Constructam jaciunt ponto: sic illa ruinam  
 Prona trahit, penitusque vadis illisa recumbit:  
 Miscent se maria, et nigres attolluntur arenas:



*Tum sonitu Prochyta alta tremat, durumque cubile  
Inarime Jovis imperiis imposita Typhoeo.*

*Æneid, IX. 708.*

————— The gigantic size  
Of Bitias, threatening with his ardent eyes.  
Not by the feeble dart he fell oppressed,  
(A dart was lost within that roomy breast,)  
But from a knotted lance, large, heavy, strong,  
Which roared like thunder as it whirl'd along;  
Not two bull-hides the impetuous force withhold,  
Nor coat of double mail with scales of gold.  
Down sunk the monster-bulk, and press'd the ground,  
(His arms and clattering shield on the vast body sound,)  
Nor with less ruin than the Baian mole,  
Raised on the seas, the surges to control,  
At once come tumbling down the rocky wall—  
Prone to the deep the stones disjointed fall  
Of the vast pile—the scattered ocean flies,  
Black sands, discolored froth, and mingled mud arise;  
The frightened billows roll, and seek the shores—  
Then trembles Prochyta, then Ischia roars,  
Typhoeus, thrown beneath by Jove's command,  
Astonished at the flaw that shakes the land,  
Soon shifts his weary side, and scarce awake,  
With wonder feels the weight press lighter on his back.

Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,  
So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.

*Odyssey, XXI. 51.*

Such a simile upon the simplest of all actions, that of opening a door, is pure burlesque.

A writer of delicacy will avoid drawing his comparisons from any image that is nauseous, ugly, or remarkably disagreeable: for, however strong the resemblance may be, more will be lost than gained by such comparison. Therefore I cannot help condemning, though with some reluctance, the following simile, or rather metaphor:

O thou fond many! with what loud applause  
Didst thou beat heav'n with blessing Bolingbroke  
Before he was what thou would'st have him be?  
And now being trimm'd up in thine own desires,  
Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him,  
That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up.  
And so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard,  
And now thou would'st eat thy dead vomit up,  
And howl'st to find it.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 3.*

The strongest objection that can lie against a comparison is, that it consists in words only, not in sense. Such false coin, or bastard wit, does extremely well in burlesque; but is far below the dignity of the epic, or of any serious composition:

The noble sister of Publicola,  
The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle  
That's curled by the frost from purest snow,  
And hangs on Dian's temple.

*Coriolanus, Act V. Sc. 2.*

There is evidently no resemblance between an icicle and a woman,

chaste or unchaste: but chastity is cold in a metaphorical sense, and an icicle is cold in a proper sense: and this verbal resemblance, in the hurry and glow of composing, has been thought a sufficient foundation for the simile. Such phantom similes are mere witticisms, which ought to have no quarter, except where purposely introduced to provoke laughter. Lucian, in his dissertation upon history, talking of a certain author, makes the following comparison, which is verbal merely:

This author's descriptions are so cold that they surpass the Caspian snow, and all the ice of the north.

Virgil has not escaped this puerility:

———— Galathæa thymo mihi dulcior Hyblæ.  
*Bucol. VII. 37.*

Galatea, sweeter to me than Hyblean thyme.

———— Ego Sardois videar tibi amarior herbis.  
*Ibid. 41.*

I may appear more bitter to thee than Sardinian herbs.

Gallo, cujus amor tantum mihi crescit in horas,  
Quantum vere novo viridis se subjicit alnus.  
*Bucol. X. 37*

Gallus, for whom my love increases hourly, as the green alder subjects itself to the new spring.

Nor Boileau, the chastest of all writers; and that even in his art of poetry:

Ainsi tel autrefois, qu'on vit avec Faret  
Charbonner de ses vers les murs d'un cabaret,  
S'en va mal à propos d'une voix insolente,  
Chanter du peuple Hébreu la fuite triomphante  
Et poursuivant Moïse au travers des déserts,  
Court avec Pharaon se noyer dans les mers.  
Chant I. l. 21.

Mais allons voir le Vrai, jusqu'en sa source même.  
Un dévot aux yeux creux, et d'abstinence blême,  
S'il n'a point le cœur juste, est affreux devant Dieu.  
L'Evangile au Chrétien ne dit, en aucun lieu,  
Sois dévot: elle dit, Sois doux, simple, équitable:  
Car d'un dévot souvent au Chrétien véritable  
La distance est deux fois plus longue, à mon avis,  
Que du Pôle Antarctique au Détroit de Davis.  
*Boileau, Satire XI*

———— But for their spirits and souls  
This word *rebellion* had froze them up  
As fish are in a pond.  
*Second Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 1.*

*Queen.* The pretty vaulting sea refus'd to drown me;  
Knowing, that thou would'st have me drown'd on shore;  
With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness.  
*Second Part Henry VI. Act III. Sc. 2.*

Here there is no manner of resemblance but in the word *drown*; for there is no real resemblance between being drowned at sea, and dying of grief at land. But perhaps this sort of tinsel wit may have a propriety in it, when used to express an affected, not a real passion, which was the Queen's case.

Pope has several similes of the same stamp. I shall transcribe

one or two from the *Essay on Man*, the gravest and most instructive of all his performances :

And hence one master passion in the breast,  
Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.      Epist. II. l. 131.

And again, talking of this same ruling or master passion :

Nature its mother, habit is its nurse ;  
Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse ;  
Reason itself but gives it edge and power ;  
As heav'n's bless'd beam turns vinegar more sour.      B. l. 145.

Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of historians :

Where their sincerity as to fact is doubtful, we strike out truth by the confrontation of different accounts ; as we strike out sparks of fire by the collision of flints and steel.

Let us vary the phrase a very little, and there will not remain a shadow of resemblance. Thus,

We discover truth by the confrontation of different accounts ; as we strike out sparks of fire by the collision of flints and steel.

Racine makes Pyrrhus say to Andromaque,

Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets consumé,  
Brulé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai,  
Hélas ! fus-je jamais si cruel que vous l'êtes !

And Orestes in the same strain :

Que les Scythes sont moins cruels qu' Hermoine.

Similes of this kind put one in mind of a ludicrous French song :

Je croyois Janneton  
Aussi douce que belle :  
Je croyois Janneton  
Plus douce qu'un mouton ;  
Hélas ! Hélas !  
Elle est cent fois, mille fois, plus cruelle  
Que n'est le tigre aux bois.

Again :

Hélas ! l'amour m'a pris,  
Comme le chat fait la souris.

A vulgar Irish ballad begins thus :

I have as much love in store  
As there's apples in Portmore.

Where the subject is burlesque or ludicrous, such similes are far from being improper. Horace says pleasantly,

Quamquam tu levior cortice.\*      L. 2. Ode 9.

And Shakspeare,

In breaking oaths he's stronger than Hercules.

And this leads me to observe, that beside the foregoing comparisons, which are all serious, there is a species, the end and purpose of which is to excite gayety or mirth. Take the following examples :

Falstaff, speaking to his page :

I do here walk before thee, like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 2.*

\* Although you are of less value than the rind.

I think he is not a pick-purse, nor a horse-stealer; but for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet, or a worm-eaten nut.

*As You Like It*, Act III. Sc. 4.

This sword a dagger had his page,  
That was but little for his age;  
And therefore waited on him so,  
As dwarfs upon knights-errant do.

*Hudibras*, Canto I.

### Description of Hudibras's horse:

He was well stay'd, and in his gait  
Preserv'd a grave, majestic state.  
At spur or switch no more he skipt,  
Or mended pace than Spaniard whipt:  
And yet so fiery, he would bound  
As if he griev'd to touch the ground:  
That Cæsar's horse, who, as fame goes,  
Had corns upon his feet and toes,  
Was not by half so tender hoof,  
Nor trod upon the ground so soft.  
And as that beast would kneel and stoop,  
(Some write) to take his rider up;  
So Hudibras his ('tis well known)  
Would often do to set him down.

Canto I.

Honor is, like a widow won  
With brisk attempt and putting on,  
With entering manfully and urging;  
Not slow approaches, like a virgin.

Canto I.

The sun had long since in the lap  
Of Thetis taken out his nap;  
And, like a lobster boil'd, the morn  
From black to red began to turn. Part II. Canto II.

Books, like men their authors, have but one way of coming into the world; but there are ten thousand to go out of it, and return no more. *Tale of a Tub*.

And in this the world may perceive the difference between the integrity of a generous author, and that of a common friend. The latter is observed to adhere close in prosperity; but on the decline of fortune, to drop suddenly off: whereas the generous author, just on the contrary, finds his hero on the dunghill, from thence by gradual steps raises him to a throne, and then immediately withdraws, expecting not so much as thanks for his pains. *Ibid.*

The most accomplish'd way of using books at present is, to serve them as some do lords, learn their titles, and then brag of their acquaintance. *Ibid.*

Box'd in a chair, the beau impatient sits,  
While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits  
And ever and anon with frightful din  
The leather sounds; he trembles from within.  
So when Troy chairmen bore the wooden steed,  
Pregnant with Greeks, impatient to be freed,  
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,  
Instead of paying chairmen run them through,)  
Laocoon struck the outside with his spear,  
And each imprison'd hero quak'd for fear.

*Description of a City Shower. Swift.*

Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,  
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.  
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,  
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,  
With like confusion, different nations fly,  
Of various habit, and of various dye,

The pierc'd battalions disunited, fall  
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.

*Rape of the Lock, Canto III.*

He does not consider that sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; nobody takes it now. *Careless Husband.*

*Lady Easy.* My dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.

*Sir Charles.* O! not at all. You shall see, I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea. *Id.*

## CHAPTER XX.

### FIGURES.

THE bestowing of sensibility and voluntary motion upon inanimate things, a bold figure—Illustrations—Personification of two kinds—The former attended with conviction—Abstract terms not well adapted to poetry—The difficulty of distinguishing between descriptive personification and a figure of speech—Dispiriting passions unfavorable to passionate personification—Passionate personification to be exclusively confined to the gratification of the passion—Descriptive personification—The writer always to confine himself to easy personification—Personification of low objects, ridiculous—The same remark applicable to abstract terms—Terms of dignity excepted—Preparation necessary to personification—Descriptive personification to be especially restrained within due bounds—Descriptive personification to be dispatched in few words.

THE endless variety of expressions brought under the head of tropes and figures by ancient critics and grammarians, makes it evident, that they had no precise criterion for distinguishing tropes and figures from plain language. It was, accordingly, my opinion, that little could be made of them in the way of rational criticism; till discovering, by a sort of accident, that many of them depend on principles formerly explained, I gladly embrace the opportunity to show the influence of these principles where it would be the least expected. Confining myself, therefore, to such figures, I am luckily freed from much trash; without dropping, as far as I remember, any trope or figure that merits a proper name. And I begin with Prosopopœia or personification, which is justly entitled to the first place.

#### SECTION I.—PERSONIFICATION.

THE bestowing of sensibility and voluntary motion upon things inanimate, is so bold a figure, as to require, one should imagine, very peculiar circumstances for operating the delusion: and yet, in the language of poetry, we find variety of expressions, which, though commonly reduced to that figure, are used without ceremony, or any sort of preparation; as, for example, *thirsty* ground, *hungry* church-yard, *furious* dart, *angry* ocean. These epithets, in their proper meaning, are attributes of sensible beings: what is their meaning when applied to things inanimate? do they make us conceive the ground, the churchyard, the dart, the ocean, to be endued with animal functions? This is a curious inquiry; and whether so or not, it cannot be declined in handling the present subject.

The mind, agitated by certain passions, is prone to bestow sensibility, upon things inanimate.\* This is an additional instance of the influence of passion upon our opinions and beliefs† I give examples. Antony, mourning over the body of Cæsar murdered in the senate-house, vents his passion in the following words:

*Antony.* O pardon me thou bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.  
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived in the tide of time.

*Julius Cæsar, Act III. Sc. 1.*

Here Antony must have been impressed with a notion, that the body of Cæsar was listening to him, without which the speech would be foolish and absurd. Nor will it appear strange, considering what is said in the chapter above cited, that passion should have such power over the mind of man. In another example of the same kind, the earth, as a common mother, is animated to give refuge against a father's unkindness:

*Almeria.* O Earth, behold, I kneel upon thy bosom,  
And bend my flowing eyes to stream upon  
Thy face, imploring thee that thou wilt yield!  
Open thy bowels of compassion, take  
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn  
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent;  
——I have no parent else.——Be thou a mother,  
And step between me and the curse of him,  
Who was—who was, but is no more a father;  
But brands my innocence with horrid crimes;  
And for the tender names of *child* and *daughter*,  
Now calls me *murderer* and *parricide*.

*Mourning Bride, Act IV. Sc. 7.*

Plaintive passions are extremely solicitous for vent; and a soliloquy commonly answers the purpose: but when such passion becomes excessive, it cannot be gratified but by sympathy from others; and if denied that consolation in a natural way, it will convert even things inanimate into sympathising beings. Thus Philoctetes complains to the rocks and promontories of the isle of Lemnos;‡ and Alcestes dying, invokes the sun, the light of day, the clouds, the earth, her husband's palace, &c.§ Moschus, lamenting the death of Bion, conceives, that the birds, the fountains, the trees, lament with him. The shepherd, who in Virgil bewails the death of Daphnis, expresseth himself thus:

Daphni, tuum Pœnos etiam ingemuisse leones  
Interitum, montesque feri sylvæque loquuntur. *Eclogue V. 27.*

The death of Daphnis woods and hills deplore,  
They cast the sound to Lybia's desert shore;  
The Lybian lions hear, and hearing roar.

Again:

Illum etiam lauri, illum etiam flevire myricæ.  
Pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe jacentem  
Mœnalus, et gelidi flevērunt saxa Lycæi. *Eclogue X. 13.*

\* Page 335.

† Chap. 2. part 5.

‡ Philoctetes of Sophocles, Act IV. Sc. 2.

§ Alcestes of Euripides, Act II. Sc. 1.

For him the lofty laurel stands in tears,  
 And hung with humid pearls the lowly shrub appears.  
 Mænalean pines the godlike swain bemoan,  
 When spread beneath a rock, he sighed alone;  
 And cold Lycæus wept from every dropping stone.

That such personification is derived from nature, will not admit the least remaining doubt, after finding it in poems of the darkest ages and remotest countries. No figure is more frequent in Ossian's works; for example:

The battle is over, said the king, and I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath of Lena, and mournful the oaks of Cromla.

Again:

The sword of Gaul trembles at his side, and longs to glitter in his hand.

King Richard having got intelligence of Bolingbroke's invasion, says, upon landing in England from his Irish expedition, in a mixture of joy and resentment:

————— I weep for joy  
 To stand upon my kingdom once again.  
 Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
 Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs  
 As a long parted mother with her child  
 Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting;  
 So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,  
 And do thee favor with my royal hands.  
 Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,  
 Nor with thy sweets comfort his rav'nous sense  
 But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom,  
 And heavy-gaited toads, lie in their way;  
 Doing annoyance to the treach'rous feet,  
 Which with usurping steps do trample thee,  
 Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies;  
 And, when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,  
 Guard it, I pr'ythee, with a lurking adder;  
 Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch  
 Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.  
 Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords:  
 This earth shall have a feeling; and these stones  
 Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king  
 Shall falter under foul rebellious arms.

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. I.*

After a long voyage it was customary among the ancients to salute the natal soil. A long voyage being of old a greater enterprise than at present, the safe return to one's country after much fatigue and danger, was a delightful circumstance; and it was natural to give the natal soil a temporary life, in order to sympathise with the traveller. See an example, *Agamemnon* of *Æschilus*, Act III. in the beginning. Regret for leaving a place to which one has been accustomed, has the same effect.\*

Terror produces the same effect: it is communicated in thought to every thing around, even to things inanimate:

Speaking of Polyphemus,

Glamorem immensum tollit, quo pontus et omnes  
 Intremuere undæ, penitusque exterrita tellus  
 Italiam. *Æneid*, III. 672.



With that he roared aloud, the dreadful cry  
Shakes earth, and air, and seas; the billows fly  
Before the bellowing noise to distant Italy.

————— As when old Ocean roars,  
And heaves huge surges to the *trembling* shores. *Iliad*, II. 249.

Go view the settling sea. The stormy wind is laid; but the billows still tremble on the deep, and seem to fear the blast. *Fingal*.

Racine, in the tragedy of *Phædra*, describing the sea-monster that destroyed Hippolytus, conceives the sea itself to be struck with terror as well as the spectators:

Le flot qui l'apporta recule épouvanté.

A man also naturally communicates his joy to all objects around, animate or inanimate:

————— As when to them who sail  
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past  
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
Sabeian odor from the spicy shore  
Of Araby the Blest; with such delay  
Well pleas'd, they slack their course, and many a league  
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles. *Paradise Lost*, b. IV.

I have been profuse of examples, to show what power many passions have to animate their objects. In all the foregoing examples, the personification, if I mistake not, is so complete as to afford conviction, momentary indeed, of life and intelligence. But it is evident, from numberless instances, that personification is not always so complete: it is a common figure in descriptive poetry, understood to be the language of the writer, and not of the persons he describes: in this case, it seldom or never comes up to conviction, even momentary, of life and intelligence. I give the following examples.

First in *his* east the glorious lamp was seen,  
Regent of day, and all th' horizon round  
Invested with bright rays; jocund to run  
*His* longitude through heav'n's high road: the gray  
Dawn and the Pleiades before *him* danc'd,  
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,  
But opposite, in levell'd west was set  
*His* mirror, with full face borrowing *her* light  
From *him*; for other flight *she* needed none.

*Paradise Lost*, b. VII. l. 370.†

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.

*Romeo and Juliet*, Act III. Sc. 5.

But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.

*Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. I.

It may, I presume, be taken for granted, that in the foregoing instances, the personification, either with the poet or his reader, amounts not to a conviction of intelligence: that the sun, the moon, the day, the morn, are not here understood to be sensible beings. What then

\* Philoctetes of Sophocles, at the close.

† The chastity of the English language, which in common usage distinguishes by genders no words but what signify beings male and female, gives thus a fine opportunity for the prosopopœia; a beauty unknown in other languages, where every word is masculine or feminine.

is the nature of this personification? I think it must be referred to the imagination: the inanimate object is imagined to be a sensible being, but without any conviction, even for a moment, that it really is so. Ideas or fictions of imagination have power to raise emotions in the mind;\* and when any thing inanimate is, in imagination, supposed to be a sensible being, it makes by that means a greater figure than when an idea is formed of it according to truth. This sort of personification, however, is far inferior to the other in elevation. Thus personification is of two kinds. The first, being more noble, may be termed *passionate personification*: the other, more humble, *descriptive personification*; because seldom or never is personification in a description carried to conviction.

The imagination is so lively and active, that its images are raised with very little effort; and this justifies the frequent use of descriptive personification. This figure abounds in Milton's *Allegro*, and *Penseroso*.

Abstract and general terms, as well as particular objects, are often necessary in poetry. Such terms, however, are not well adapted to poetry, because they suggest not any image: I can readily form an image of Alexander or Achilles in wrath; but I cannot form an image of wrath in the abstract, or of wrath independent of a person. Upon that account, in works addressed to the imagination, abstract terms are frequently personified; but such personification rests upon imagination merely, not upon conviction.

Sed mihi vel Tellus optem prius ima dehiscat;  
Vel Pater omnipotens adigat me fulmine ad umbras,  
Pallentes umbras Erebi, noctemque profundam,  
Ante pudor quam te violo, aut tua jura resolvo.

*Æneid*, IV. l. 24.

But first let yawning earth a passage rend,  
And let me through the dark abyss descend;  
First let avenging Jove with flames from high  
Drive down this body to the nether sky,  
Condemned with ghosts in endless night to lie—  
Before I break the plighted faith I gave!

Thus, to explain the effects of slander, it is imagined to be a voluntary agent.

————— No, 'tis Slander;  
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue  
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie  
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,  
Maids, matrons: nay, the secrets of the grave  
This viperous Slander enters.

*Shakspeare*, *Cymbeline*, Act III. Sc. 2.

As also human passions: take the following example:

————— For *Pleasure* and *Revenge*  
Have ears more deaf than adders, to the voice  
Of any true decision. *Troilus and Cressida*, Act II. Sc. 4.

Virgil explains fame and its effects by a still greater variety of action.†

\* See Appendix, containing definitions and explanations of terms § 92.

† *Æneid*, IV. 173.

And Shakspeare personifies death and its operations in a manner singularly fanciful:

————— Within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,  
Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,  
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene  
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;  
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,  
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,  
Were brass impregnable; and humor'd thus,  
Comes at the last, and with a little pin  
Bores through his castle-walls, and farewell king.

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 2.*

Not less successfully is life and action given even to sleep:

*King Henry.* How many thousands of my poorest subjects  
Are at this hour asleep! O gentle *Sleep*,  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?  
Why rather, *Sleep*, ly'st thou in smoky cribs,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,  
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber  
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody?  
O thou dull god, why ly'st thou with the vile  
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch,  
A watch-case to a common larum-bell?  
Wilt thou, upon the high and giddy mast,  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them  
With deaf'ning clamors in the slippery shrouds,  
That, with the hurly, Death itself awakes?  
Can'st thou, O partial *Sleep*, give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;  
And, in the calmest and the stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a King? Then, happy low! lie down  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act III. Sc. 1.*

I shall add one example more, to show that descriptive personification may be used with propriety, even where the purpose of the discourse is instruction merely:

Oh! let the steps of youth be cautious,  
How they advance into a dangerous world;  
Our duty only can conduct us safe.  
Our passions are seducers: but of all  
The strongest *Love*. He first approaches us  
In childish play, wantoning in our walks:  
If heedlessly we wander after him,  
As he will pick out all the dancing-way,  
We're lost, and hardly to return again.  
We should take warning: he is painted blind,  
To show us, if we fondly follow him,  
The precipices we may fall into.

Therefore let *Virtus* take him by the hand :  
Directed so, he leads to certain joy.

*Southern.*

Hitherto success has attended our steps: but whether we shall complete our progress with equal success, seems doubtful; for when we look back to the expressions mentioned in the beginning, *thirsty* ground, *furious* dart, and such like, it seems no less difficult than at first, to say whether there is in them any sort of personification. Such expressions evidently raise not the slightest conviction of sensibility: nor do I think they amount to descriptive personification; because, in them, we do not even figure the ground or the dart to be animated. If so, they cannot at all come under the present subject. To show which, I shall endeavor to trace the effect that such expressions have in the mind. Does not the expression *angry ocean*, for example, tacitly compare the ocean in a storm to a man in wrath? By this tacit comparison, the ocean is elevated above its rank in nature; and yet personification is excluded, because, by the very nature of comparison, the things compared are kept distinct, and the native appearance of each is preserved. It will be shown afterward, that expressions of this kind belong to another figure, which I term *a figure of speech*, and which employs the seventh section of the present chapter.

Though thus in general we can distinguish descriptive personification from what is merely a figure of speech, it is, however, often difficult to say, with respect to some expressions, whether they are of the one kind or of the other. Take the following instances:

The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently *kiss* the trees,  
And they did make no noise; in such a night,  
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan wall,  
And sigh'd his soul towards the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

*Merchant of Venice*, Act V. Sc. 1.

————— I have seen  
Th' *ambitious* ocean swell, and rage, and foam,  
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds.

*Julius Caesar*, Act I. Sc. 3.

With respect to these, and numberless other examples of the same kind, it must depend upon the reader, whether they are examples of personification, or of a figure of speech merely: a sprightly imagination will advance them to the former class; with a plain reader they will remain in the latter.

Having thus at large explained the present figure, its different kinds, and the principles upon which it is founded; what comes next in order, is, to show in what cases it may be introduced with propriety, when it is suitable, when unsuitable. I begin with observing, that passionate personification is not promoted by every passion indifferently. All dispiriting passions are averse to it; and remorse, in particular, is too serious and severe to be gratified with a phantom of the mind. I cannot therefore approve of the following speech of Enobarbus, who had deserted his master Antony:

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,  
When men revolted shall upon record

Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did  
 Before thy face repent —————  
 Oh sovereign Mistress of true melancholy,  
 The poisonous damp of night dispunge upon me,  
 That life, a very rebel to my will,  
 May hang no longer on me.

*Anthony and Cleopatra, Act IV. Sc. 9.*

If this can be justified, it must be upon the Heathen system of theology, which converted into deities the sun, moon, and stars.

Secondly, after a passionate personification is properly introduced, it ought to be confined to its proper province, that of gratifying the passion, without giving place to any sentiment or action but what answers that purpose; for personification is at any rate a bold figure, and ought to be employed with great reserve. The passion of love, for example, in a plaintive tone, may give a momentary life to woods and rocks, in order to make them sensible of the lover's distress; but no passion will support a conviction so far-stretched, as that these woods and rocks should be living witnesses to report the distress to others:

Ch' i' t'ami piu de la mia vita  
 Se tu nol sai, crudele,  
 Chiedilo à queste selve  
 Che te'l diranno, et te'l diran con esse  
 Le fere loro e i duri sterpi, e i sassi  
 Di questi alpestri monti,  
 Ch' i' ho sì spesse volte  
 Inteneriti al suon de' miei lamenti.

*Pastor Fido, Act III. Sc. 3.*

No lover who is not crazed will utter such a sentiment: it is plainly the operation of the writer, indulging his inventive faculty without regard to nature. The same observation is applicable to the following passage.

In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
 With good old folks, and let them tell their tales  
 Of woful ages, long ago betid:  
 And ere thou bid good night, to quit their grief,  
 Tell them the lamentable fall of me,  
 And send the hearers weeping to their beds.  
 For why! the senseless brands will sympathise  
 The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,  
 And in compassion weep the fire out.

*Richard II. Act V. Sc. 1.*

One must read this passage very seriously to avoid laughing. The following passage is quite extravagant: the different parts of the human body are too intimately connected with self, to be personified by the power of any passion; and after converting such a part into a sensible being, it is still worse to make it be conceived as rising in rebellion against self:

*Cleopatra.* Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.  
 Coward flesh —————  
 Would'st thou conspire with Cæsar, to betray me,  
 As thou wert none of mine? Ill force thee to't.

*Dryden, All for Love, Act V.*

Next comes descriptive personification; upon which I must observe, in general, that it ought to be cautiously used. A personage in a tragedy, agitated by a strong passion, deals in warm sentiments; and the reader, catching fire by sympathy, relishes the boldest personifications: but a writer even in the most lively description, taking a lower flight, ought to content himself with such easy personifications as agree with the tone of mind inspired by the description. Nor is even such easy personification always admitted; for in plain narrative, the mind, serious and sedate, rejects personification altogether. Strada, in his history of the Belgic wars, has the following passage, which, by a strained elevation above the tone of the subject, deviates into burlesque.

Vix descenderat a prætoris navi Cæsar; cum fœda illico exorta in portu tempestas, classem impetu disjecit, prætoriam hausit; quasi non vecturam amplius Cæsarem, Cæsarisque fortunam.\*

*Dec. I. L. 1.*

Neither do I approve, in Shakspeare, the speech of King John, gravely exhorting the citizens of Angiers to a surrender; though a tragic writer has much greater latitude than a historian. Take the following specimen:

The cannons have their bowels full of wrath;  
And ready mounted are they to spit forth  
Their iron-indignation 'gainst your walls.

*Act II. Sc. 1.*

Secondly, if extraordinary marks of respect to a person of low rank be ridiculous, no less so is the personification of a low subject. This rule chiefly regards descriptive personification; for a subject can hardly be low that is the cause of a violent passion; in that circumstance, at least, it must be of importance. But to assign any rule other than taste merely, for avoiding things below even descriptive personification, will, I am afraid, be a hard task. A poet of superior genius, possessing the power of inflaming the mind, may take liberties that would be too bold in others. Homer appears not extravagant in animating his darts and arrows: nor Thomson in animating the seasons, the winds, the rains, the dews; he even ventures to animate the diamond, and does it with propriety:

————— That polish'd bright  
And all its native lustre let abroad,  
Dares, as it sparkles on the fair one's breast,  
With vain ambition emulate her eyes.

But there are things familiar and base, to which personification cannot descend. In a composed state of mind, to animate a lump of matter even in the most rapid flight of fancy, degenerates into burlesque:

How now! What noise! that spirit's possessed with haste,  
That wounds th' unresisting postern with these strokes.

*Shakspeare, Measure for Measure, Act IV. Sc. 2.*

————— Or from the shore  
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,  
And sing their wild notes to the list'ning waste.

*Thomson, Spring, l. 23.*

\* Scarcely had Cæsar descended from the Prætorian ship, when a boisterous tempest broke out in that harbor, scattered the fleet by its violence, and sunk the Prætorian, as if it was no more to carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortunes.

Speaking of a man's hand cut off in battle:

Te decisa suum, Laride, dextera quatit:  
Semianimesque micant digiti: ferrumque retractant.  
*Æneid, X. 395.*

————— Laris' hand  
Dismembered, sought its owner on the strand,  
The trembling fingers yet the falchion strain,  
And threaten still the extended stroke in vain.

The personification here of a hand is insufferable, especially in a plain narration: not to mention that such a trivial incident is too minutely described.

The same observation is applicable to abstract terms, which ought not to be animated unless they have some natural dignity. Thomson, in this article, is licentious; witness the following instances out of many:

O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!  
On which *the power of cultivation* lies,  
And joys to see the wonders of his toil. *Summer, l. 1435.*

Then sated *Hunger* bids his brother *Thirst*  
Produce the mighty bowl:  
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn  
Mature and perfect, from *his* dark retreat  
Of thirty years, and now *his honest front*  
Flames in the light refulgent. *Autumn, l. 516.*

Thirdly, it is not sufficient to avoid improper subjects: some preparation is necessary, in order to rouse the mind: for the imagination refuses its aid, till it be warmed at least, if not inflamed. Yet Thomson, without the least ceremony or preparation, introduces each season as a sensible being:

From brightening fields of æther fair disclos'd,  
Child of the sun, refulgent *Summer* comes,  
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth.  
He comes attended by the sultry hours,  
And ever fanning breezes, on his way;  
While from his ardent look, the turning Spring  
Averts her blushful face, and earth and skies  
All smiling to his hot dominion leaves. *Summer, l. 1.*

See *Winter* comes, to rule the vary'd year,  
Sullen and sad with all his rising train,  
*Vapors, and clouds, and storms.* *Winter, l. 1.*

This has violently the air of writing mechanically without taste. It is not natural that the imagination of a writer should be so much heated at the very commencement; and, at any rate, he cannot expect such ductility in his readers. But if this practice can be justified by authority, Thomson has one of no mean note: Vida begins his first eclogue in the following words:

Dicite, vos Musæ, et juvenum memorate querelas  
Dicite; nam motas ipsas ad carmina cautes  
Et requiescere suos perhibent vaga flumina cursus.

Sing, ye Muses, and record the repinings of youth—sing, for song has moved the rocks and stopped the course of the wandering rivers.



Even Shakspeare is not always careful to prepare the mind for this bold figure. Take the following instance:

---

Upon these taxations,  
 The clothiers all, not able to maintain  
 The many to them 'longing, have put off  
 The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers; who,  
 Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger,  
 And lack of other means, in desp'rate manner  
 Daring th' event to th' teeth, are all in uproar,  
 And *Danger* serves among them. *Henry VIII. Act I. Sc. 2.*

Fourthly, descriptive personification, still more than what is passionate, ought to be kept within the bounds of moderation. A reader warmed with a beautiful subject, can imagine, even without passion, the winds, for example, to be animated: but still the winds are the subject; and any action ascribed to them beyond or contrary to their usual operation, appearing unnatural, seldom fails to banish the illusion altogether: the reader's imagination, too, far strained, refuses its aid; and the description becomes obscure, instead of being more lively and striking. In this view, the following passage, describing Cleopatra on shipboard, appears to me exceptionable:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
 Burnt on the water: the poop was beaten gold,  
 Purple the sails, and so perfum'd, that  
 The winds were love-sick with 'em.  
*Antony and Cleopatra, Act II. Sc. 2.*

The winds in their impetuous course have so much the appearance of fury, that it is easy to figure them wreaking their resentment against their enemies, by destroying houses, ships, &c.; but to figure them love-sick, has no resemblance to them in any circumstance. In another passage, where Cleopatra is also the subject, the personification of the air is carried beyond all bounds:

---

The city cast  
 Its people out upon her; and Antony  
 Inthron'd i' th' market-place, did sit alone,  
 Whistling to th' air, which but for vacancy,  
 Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
 And made a gap in nature.  
*Antony and Cleopatra, Act II. Sc. 2.*

The following personification of the earth or soil is not less wild

She shall be dignified with this high honor,  
 To bear my lady's train; lest the base earth  
 Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss;  
 And of so great a favor growing proud,  
 Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,  
 And make rough winter everlastingly.  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act II. Sc. 4.*

Shakspeare, far from approving such intemperance of imagination, puts this speech in the mouth of a ranting lover. Neither can I relish what follows:

Omnia quæ, Phœbo quondam meditante, beatus  
 Andit Eurotas, jussitque edicere lauros,  
 Ille canit. *Virgil, Buc. VI. 82.*

Whatever songs besides the Delphian god  
Had taught the laurels and the Spartan flood  
Silenus sung.

The cheerfulness singly of a pastoral song, will scarcely support personification in the lowest degree. But admitting, that a river gently flowing may be imagined a sensible being listening to a song, I cannot enter into the conceit of the river's ordering his laurels to learn the song: here all resemblance to any thing real is quite lost. This however is copied literally by one of our greatest poets; early indeed, before maturity of taste or judgment:

Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along,  
And bade his willows learn the moving song.  
*Pope's Pastorals, Past. IV. l. 13.*

This author, in riper years, is guilty of a much greater deviation from the rule. Dulness may be imagined a deity or idol, to be worshipped by bad writers; but then some sort of disguise is requisite, some bastard virtue must be bestowed, to make such worship in some degree excusable. Yet in the *Dunciad*, Dulness, without the least disguise, is made the object of worship. The mind rejects such a fiction as unnatural; for dulness is a defect, of which even the dullest mortal is ashamed:

Then he: Great tamer of all human art!  
First in my care, and ever at my heart;  
Dulness! whose good old cause I yet defend,  
With whom my Muse began, with whom shall end,  
E'er since Sir Fopling's periwig was praise,  
To the last honors of the Bull and Bays!  
O thou! of bus'ness the directing soul!  
To this our head, like bias to the bowl,  
Which as more pond'rous, made its aim more true,  
Obliquely waddling to the mark in view:  
O! ever gracious to perplex'd mankind,  
Still spread a healing mist before the mind:  
And, lest we err by Wit's wild dancing light,  
Secure us kindly in our native night.  
Or, if to wit a coxcomb make pretence,  
Guard the sure barrier between that and sense;  
Or quite unravel all the reas'ning thread,  
And hang some curious cobweb in its stead!  
As, forc'd from wind-guns, lead itself can fly,  
And pond'rous slugs cut swiftly through the sky;  
As clocks to weight their nimble motion owe,  
The wheels above urg'd by the load below:  
Me Emptiness and Dulness could inspire,  
And were my elasticity, and fire.

B. I. 163.

Fifthly, the enthusiasm of passion may have the effect to prolong passionate personification: but descriptive personification cannot be dispatched in too few words: a circumstantiated description dissolves the charm, and makes the attempt to personify appear ridiculous. Homer succeeds in animating his darts and arrows: but such personification, spun out in a French translation, is mere burlesque:

Et la flèche en furie, avide de son sang,  
Part, volo à lui, l'atteint, et lui perce le flanc

Horace says happily,

Post equitem sedet atra Cura.

Dark Care sits behind the horseman.

Observe how this thought degenerates by being divided, like the former, into a number of minute parts :

Un fou rempli d'erreurs, que le trouble accompagne  
Et malade à la ville ainsi qu' à la campagne,  
En vain monte à cheval pour tromper son ennui,  
Le Chagrin monte en croupe, et galope avec lui.

A poet, in a short and lively expression, may animate his muse his genius, and even his verse : but to animate his verse, and to address a whole epistle to it, as Boileau does,\* is insupportable.

The following passage is not less faulty :

Her fate is whisper'd by the gentle breeze,  
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees ;  
The trembling trees, in ev'ry plain and wood,  
Her fate remurmur to the silver flood ;  
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears  
Swell'd with new passion, and o'erflows with tears ;  
The winds, and trees, and floods, her death deplore,  
Daphne, our grief ! our glory ! now no more.

*Pope's Pastorals, IV. 61.*

Let grief or love have the power to animate the winds, the trees, the floods, provided the figure be dispatched in a single expression : even in that case, the figure seldom has a good effect ; because grief or love of the pastoral kind, are causes rather too faint for so violent an effect as imagining the winds, trees, or floods, to be sensible beings. But when this figure is deliberately spread out, with great regularity and accuracy, through many lines, the reader, instead of relishing it, is struck with its ridiculous appearance.

## SECTION II.

### APOSTROPHE.

Apostrophe, the bestowing of a momentary presence on an absent person—Illustrations—The mind to be agitated.

THIS figure and the former are derived from the same principle. If, to humor a plaintive passion, we can bestow a momentary sensibility upon an inanimate object, it is not more difficult to bestow a momentary presence upon a sensible being who is absent :

Hinc Drepani me portus et illætabilis ora.  
Accipit. Hic, pelagi tot tempestatibus actus,  
Heu ! genitorem, omnis curæ casusque levamen,  
Amitto Anchisen : *hic me pater optime fessum*  
*Deseris*, heu ! tantis nequicquam erepte periclis.  
Nec vates Helenus, cum multa horrenda moneret  
Hos mihi prædixit luctus ; non dira Celæno. *Æneid, III 707.*

At length on shore the weary fleet arrived,  
Which Drepanum's unhappy port received.

\* Epistle 10.

Here after endless labors, often tossed  
 By raging storms and driven on every coast,  
 "My father! thou didst leave me—thee I lost."  
 Ease of my cares and solace of my pain,  
 Saved through a thousand toils, but saved in vain.  
 The prophet who my future woes revealed  
 Yet this the greatest and the worst concealed,  
 And dire Celæno, whose foreboding skill  
 Denounced all else, was silent of this ill.

Strike the harp in praise of Bragela, whom I left in the isle of mist, the spouse of my love. Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock to find the sails of Cuchullin? The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love, and the dark winds sigh in thy hair. Retire to the hall of my feasts, and think of the times that are past; for I will not return till the storm of war is gone. O Connal, speak of wars and arms, and send her from my mind; for lovely with her raven-hair is the white-bosom'd daughter of Sorglan.

Fingal, B. I.

Speaking of Fingal absent:

Happy are thy people, O Fingal; thine arm shall fight their battles. Thou art the first in their dangers; the wisest in the days of their peace: thou speakest, and thy thousands obey; and armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, O Fingal.

This figure is sometimes joined with the former: things inanimate, to qualify them for listening to a passionate expostulation, are not only personified, but also conceived to be present:

*Et si fata Deum, si mens non læva fuisset,  
 Impulerat ferro Argolicas fœdare latebras:  
 Trojaque nunc stares, Priamique arx alta maneres.*

*Æneid, II. 54.*

And had not Heaven the fall of Troy designed,  
 Or had not men been fated to be blind,  
 Then had our lances pierced the treacherous wood,  
 And Ilion's towers and Priam's empire stood.

*Helena.* ————— Poor Lord, is't I  
 That chase thee from thy country, and expose  
 Those tender limbs of thine to the event,  
 Of non-sparing war? And is it I  
 That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou  
 Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
 Of smoky muskets? *O you leaden messengers,*  
 That ride upon the violent speed of fire.  
 Fly with false aim; pierce the still moving air  
 That sings with piercing; do not touch my Lord.

*All's Well that Ends Well, Act III. Sc.*

And let them lift ten thousand swords, said Nathos, with a smile: the sons of ear-borne Usnoth will never tremble in danger. Why dost thou roll with all thy foam, thou roaring sea of Ullin? why do ye rustle on your dark wings, ye whistling tempests of the sky? Do ye think, ye storms, that ye keep Nathos on the coast? No; his soul detains him; children of the night! Althos, bring my father's arms, &c.

Fingal.

Whither hast thou fled, O wind, said the King of Morven! Dost thou rustle in the chambers of the south, and pursue the shower in other lands? Why comest not thou to my sails, to the blue face of my seas? The foe is in the land of Morven, and the King is absent.

Fingal.

Hast thou left thy blue course in heaven, golden-hair'd son of the sky! The west hath opened its gates; the bed of thy repose is there. The waves gather to behold thy beauty: they lift their trembling heads; they see thee lovely in thy sleep; but they shrink away with fear. Rest in thy shadowy cave, O Sun! and let thy return be in joy.

Fingal.

Daughter of Heaven, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant. Thou comest forth in loveliness: the stars attend thy blue steps in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O Moon! and brighten their dark brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, daughter of the night? The stars are ashamed in thy presence, and turn aside their sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? and are they who rejoiced with thee at night no more?—Yes, they have fallen, fair light; and often dost thou retire to mourn.—But thou thyself shalt, one night, fail; and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their heads: they, who in thy presence were ashamed, will rejoice.

*Fingal.*

This figure, like all others, requires an agitation of mind. In plain narrative, as, for example, in giving the genealogy of a family, it has no good effect:

———— Fauno Picus pater; isque parentem  
Te, Saturne, refert; tu sanguinis ultimus auctor.

*Æneid, VII. 48.*

But Faunus came from Picus—Picus drew  
His birth from Saturn, if records be true;  
Thus king Latinus in the third degree  
Had Saturn author of his family.

### SECTION III.

#### HYPERBOLE.

Magnifying or diminishing an object beyond due bounds, an hyperbole—Objects more successfully magnified than diminished—Hyperbole proper when the subject exceeds the common measure—An hyperbole not to be introduced in the description of an ordinary thing—Not suitable to a dispiriting passion—Not to be introduced till the reader is warmed—Not to be overstrained—To comprehend the fewest words possible.

In this figure, by which an object is magnified or diminished beyond truth, we have another effect of the foregoing principle. An object of an uncommon size, either very great of its kind or very little, strikes us with surprise; and this emotion produces a momentary conviction that the object is greater or less than it is in reality: the same effect, precisely, attends figurative grandeur or littleness; and hence the hyperbole, which expresses that momentary conviction. A writer, taking advantage of this natural delusion, warms his description greatly by the hyperbole: and the reader, even in his coolest moments, relishes the figure, being sensible that it is the operation of nature upon a glowing fancy.

It cannot have escaped observation, that a writer is commonly more successful in magnifying by an hyperbole than in diminishing. The reason is, that a minute object contracts the mind, and fetters its power of imagination; but that the mind, dilated and inflamed with a grand object, moulds objects for its gratification with great facility. Longinus, with respect to diminishing hyperbole, quotes the following ludicrous thought from a comic poet: "He was owner of a bit of ground no larger than a Lacedæmonian letter." † But, for the reason now given, the hyperbole has by far the greater force in magnifying objects; of which take the following examples:

\* See Chap. VIII. † Chap. XXXI. of his Treatise on the Sublime.

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever  
And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number  
the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

*Genesis, XIII. 15, 16*

*Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret  
Gramina: nec teneras cursu læsisset aristæ. Æneid, VII. 808.*

\* Outstripped the winds in speed upon the plain,  
Flew o'er the field, nor hurt the bearded grain.

————— *Atque imo barathri ter gurgite vastos  
Sorbet in abruptum fluctus, rursusque sub auras  
Erigit alternos, et sidera verberat undâ. Æneid, III. 421.*

And in her greedy whirlpool sucks the tides,  
Then spouts them from below; with fury driven,  
The waves mount up, and wash the face of heaven.

————— *Horificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis,  
Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,  
Turbine fumantem piceo et candente favilla:  
Attollitque globos flammæ, et sidera lambit. Æneid, III. 571*

The port capacious and secure from wind  
Is to the foot of thundering Ætna joined,  
By turns a patchy cloud she rolls on high,  
By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,  
And flakes of mountain flames that lick the sky.

#### Speaking of Polyphemus:

————— *Ipsæ arduus, altaque pulsat  
Sidera. Æneid, III. 619.*

Erects his head, and stares within the skies.

————— *When he speaks,  
The air, a charter'd libertine, is still. Henry V. Act I. Sc. 1.*

Now shield with shield, with helmet helmet clos'd,  
To armor armor, lance to lance oppos'd.  
Host against host with shadowy squadrons drew,  
The sounding darts in iron tempests flew.  
Victors and vanquish'd join promiscuous cries,  
And shrilling shouts and dying groans arise;  
With streaming blood the slipp'ry fields are dy'd,  
And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide. *Iliad, IV. 508*

#### The following may also pass, though far stretched:

*E conjungendo à temerario ardore  
Estrema forza, e infaticabil lena  
Vien che si' impetuoso il ferro gire,  
Che ne trema la terra, e' l' ciel balena. Gierusalem, Cant. VI. st. 46.*

Uniting force extreme, with endless wrath,  
Supporting both with youth and strength untired,  
His thundering blows so fast about he la'th,  
That skies and earth the flying sparkles fired. *Fairfax.*

Quintillian † is sensible that this figure is natural: "For," says he, "not contented with truth, we naturally incline to augment or diminish beyond it; and for that reason the hyperbole is familiar even among the vulgar and illiterate:" and he adds very justly, "That the hyperbole is then proper, when the subject of itself exceeds the common measure." From these premises, one would not expect the following inference, the only reason he can find for justifying this figure of speech, "Conceditur enim amplius dicere

\* Camilla, the Volscian heroine.

† L. VIII. cap. 6. in fin.

quia dici quantum est non potest: meliusque ultra quam citra stat oratio." (We are indulged to say more than enough, because we cannot say enough; and it is better to be above than under.) In the name of wonder, why this childish reasoning, after observing that the hyperbole is founded on human nature? I could not resist this personal stroke of criticism; intended not against our author, for no human creature is exempt from error, but against the blind veneration that is paid to the ancient classic writers, without distinguishing their blemishes from their beauties.

Having examined the nature of this figure, and the principle on which it is erected, I proceed, as in the first section, to the rules by which it ought to be governed. And, in the first place, it is a capital fault, to introduce an hyperbole in the description of any thing ordinary or familiar; for in such a case, it is altogether unnatural, being destitute of surprise, its only foundation. Take the following instance, where the subject is extremely familiar, viz. swimming to gain the shore after a shipwreck.

I saw him beat the surges under him,  
And ride upon their backs; he trode the water,  
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
The surge most swoln that met him: his bold head  
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd  
Himself with his good arms, in lusty strokes  
To th' shore, that o'er his wave-borne basis bow'd,  
As stooping to relieve him. *Tempest, Act II. Sc. I.*

In the next place, it may be gathered from what is said, that an hyperbole can never suit the tone of any dispiriting passion: sorrow, in particular, will never prompt such a figure; for which reason the following hyperboles must be condemned as unnatural:

*K. Rich.* Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!  
We'll make foul weather with despised tears:  
Our sighs, and they, shall lodge the summer-corn,  
And make a dearth in this revolting land.  
*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 3.*

Draw them to Tyber's bank, and weep your tears  
Into the channel, till the lowest stream  
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all. *Julius Caesar, Act I. Sc. I.*

Thirdly, a writer, if he wish to succeed, ought always to have the reader in his eye: he ought in particular never to venture a bold thought or expression, till the reader be warmed and prepared. For that reason, an hyperbole in the beginning of a work can never be in its place. Example:

Jam pauca aratro jugera regis  
Moles relinquent. *Horat. Carm. l. 2. ode 15.*  
So great our palaces are now,  
They'll leave few acres for the plough.

The nicest point of all, is to ascertain the natural limits of an hyperbole, beyond which being overstrained it has a bad effect. Longinus, in the above-cited chapter, with great propriety of thought, enters a caveat against an hyperbole of this kind: he compares it to a bow-string, which relaxes by overstraining, and produces an effect



directly opposite to what is intended. To ascertain any precise boundary, would be difficult, if not impracticable. Mine shall be an humbler task, which is, to give a specimen of what I reckon overstrained hyperbole; and I shall be brief upon them, because examples are to be found every where; no fault is more common among writers of inferior rank; and instances are found even among classical writers; witness the following hyperbole, too bold even for an Hotspur.

Hotspur talking of Mortimer:

In single opposition hand to hand,  
He did confound the best part of an hour  
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.  
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,  
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood,  
Who then affrighted with their bloody looks,  
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,  
And hid his crisp'd head in the hollow bank,  
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.

*First Part Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 3.*

Speaking of Henry V.,

England ne'er had a king until his time:  
Virtue he had, deserving to command:  
His brandish'd sword did blind men with its beams:  
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings:  
His sparkling eyes, replete with awful fire,  
More dazzled, and drove back his enemies,  
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.  
What should I say? his deeds exceed all speech:  
He never lifted up his hand, but conquer'd.

*First Part Henry VI. Act I. Sc. I.*

Lastly, an hyperbole, after it is introduced with all advantages, ought to be comprehended within the fewest words possible: as it cannot be relished but in the hurry and swelling of the mind, a leisurely view dissolves the charm, and discovers the description to be extravagant at least, and perhaps also ridiculous. This fault is palpable in a sonnet which passes for one of the most complete in the French language. Phillis, in a long and florid description, is made as far to outshine the sun as he outshines the stars

Le silence régnoit sur la terre et sur l'onde,  
L'air devenoit serein et l'Olympe vermeil, .  
Et l'amoureux Zéphir affranchi du sommeil,  
Ressuscitoit les fleurs d'une haleine féconde.  
L'Aurore déployoit l'or de sa tresse blonde,  
Et semoit de rubis le chemin du soleil;  
Enfin ce Dieu venoit au plus grand appareil  
Qu'il soit jamais venu pour éclairer le monde.  
Quand la jeune Phillis au visage riant,  
Sortant de son palais plus clair que l'orient,  
Fit voir une lumière et plus vive et plus belle.  
Sacré flambeau du jour, n'en soyez point jaloux.  
Vous parûtes alors aussi peu devant elle,  
Que les feux de la nuit avoient fait devant vous. *Mallerville.*

There is in Chaucer a thought expressed in a single line, which gives more lustre to a young beauty, than the whole of this much labored poem:

Up rose the sun, and up rose Emelie.

## SECTION IV.

The means or instrument, conceived to be the agent—Examples.

WHEN we survey a number of connected objects, that which makes the greatest figure employs chiefly our attention; and the emotion it raises, if lively, prompts us even to exceed nature in the conception we form of it. Take the following examples:

For Neleus' son Alcides' *rage* had slain.

A broken rock the *force* of Pirus threw.

In these instances, the rage of Hercules and the force of Pirus, being the capital circumstances, are so far exalted as to be conceived the agents that produce the effects.

In the following instances, hunger being the chief circumstance in the description, is itself imagined to be the patient.

Whose hunger has not tasted food these three days. *Jane Shore.*

————— As when the *force*  
Of subterranean wind transports a hill. *Paradise Lost.*

————— As when the *potent rod*  
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day  
Wav'd round the coast, upcall'd a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts. *Paradise Lost.*

## SECTION V.

A figure which, among related objects, extends the properties of one to another—Without a name—The foundation of this figure—Not warrantable, except among things intimately connected—An attribute of a cause for an attribute of an effect—An effect as of a cause—An effect expressed as an attribute of a cause—An attribute of a subject bestowed on one of its parts—A quality of an agent ascribed to an instrument—The object on which it operates—Quality one subject gives another—Circumstances expressed as a quality of a subject—The property of one object transferred to another.

THIS figure is not dignified with a proper name, because it has been overlooked by writers. It merits, however, a place in this work; and must be distinguished from those formerly handled, as depending on a different principle. *Giddy brink, jovial wine, daring wound*, are examples of this figure. Here are adjectives that cannot be made to signify any quality of the substantives to which they are joined: a *brink*, for example, cannot be termed *giddy* in a sense, either proper or figurative, that can signify any of its qualities or attributes. When we examine attentively the expression, we discover, that a *brink* is termed *giddy* from producing that effect in those who stand on it. In the same manner a wound is said to be *daring*, not with respect to itself, but with respect to the boldness of the person who inflicts it: and wine is said to be *jovial*, as inspiring mirth and jollity. Thus the attributes of one subject are extended to another with which it is connected; and the expression of such a thought must be considered as a figure, because the attribute is not applicable to the subject in any proper sense.

How are we to account for this figure, which we see lies in the thought, and to what principle shall we refer it? Have poets a privilege to alter the nature of things, and at pleasure to bestow attributes upon a subject to which they do not belong? We have had often occasion to inculcate, that the mind passes easily and sweetly along a train of connected objects; and, where the objects are intimately connected, that it is disposed to carry along the good or bad properties of one to another; especially when it is in any degree inflamed with these properties.\* From this principle is derived the figure under consideration. Language, invented for the communication of thought, would be imperfect, if it were not expressive even of the slightest propensities and more delicate feelings: but language cannot remain so imperfect among a people who have received any polish; because language is regulated by internal feeling, and is gradually improved to express whatever passes in the mind. Thus, for example, when a sword in the hand of a coward, is termed *a coward sword*, the expression is significative of an internal operation; for the mind, in passing from the agent to its instrument, is disposed to extend to the latter the properties of the former. Governed by the same principle, we say *listening* fear, by extending the attribute *listening* of the man who listens, to the passion with which he is moved. In the expression, *bold deed*, or *audax facinus*, we extend to the effect what properly belongs to the cause. But not to waste time by making a commentary upon every expression of this kind, the best way to give a complete view of the subject, is to exhibit a table of the different relations that may give occasion to this figure. And in viewing the table, it will be observed, that the figure can never have any grace but where the relations are of the most intimate kind.

1. An attribute of the cause expressed as an attribute of the effect

*Audax facinus.*†

Of yonder fleet a *bold* discovery make.

An impious mortal gave the *daring* wound.

—————To my *advent'rous* song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar.

*Paradise Lost.*

2. An attribute of the effect expressed as an attribute of the cause.

Quos periisse ambos *misera* censebam in mari.‡

*Plautus.*

No wonder, fallen such a *pernicious* height.

*Paradise Lost.*

3. An effect expressed as an attribute of the cause.

Jovial wine, Giddy brink, Drowsy night, Musing midnight, Panting height,  
Astonish'd thought, Mournful gloom.

Casting a dim *religious* light.

*Milton, Comus.*

And the *merry* bells ring round,

And the *jocund* rebecks sound.

*Milton, Allegro.*

4. An attribute of a subject bestowed upon one of its parts or members.

\* See Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 5.

† A bold deed.

‡ Both of whom perished in the miserable ocean.

*Longing arms.*

It was the nightingale and not the lark,  
That pierc'd the *fearful* hollow of thine ear.

*Romeo and Juliet, Act III. Sc. 5.*

Oh, lay by  
Those most ungentle looks and angry weapons;  
Unless you mean my griefs and killing fears  
Should stretch me out at your relentless feet.

*Fair Penitent, Act III.*

And ready now  
To stoop with *wearied* wing and *willing* feet,  
On the bare outside of this world.

*Paradise Lost, B. III.*

5. A quality of the agent given to the instrument with which it operates.

Why peep your *coward* swords half out their shells!

6. An attribute of the agent given to the subject upon which it operates.

*High-climbing* hill.

*Milton.*

7. A quality of one subject given to another.

Icci, *beatis* nunc Arabum invides  
Gazis.\*

*Horat. Carm. l. 1. ode 29.*

When sapless age, and weak unable limbs,  
Should bring thy father to his *drooping* chair.

*Shakspeare.*

By art, the pilot through the boiling deep  
And howling tempest, steers the *fearless* ship.

*Iliad, XXIII. 386.*

Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,  
And sunk transported on the *conscious* bed.

*Odyssey, VIII. 337.*

A *stupid* moment motionless she stood.

*Summer, l. 1336.*

8. A circumstance connected with a subject, expressed as a quality of the subject.

*Breezy* summit.

'Tis ours the chance of *fighting* fields to try.

*Iliad, I. 301.*

Oh! had I dy'd before that *well-fought* wall.

*Odyssey, V. 395.*

From this table it appears, that the adorning of a cause with an attribute of the effect, is not so agreeable as the opposite expression. The progress from cause to effect is natural and easy: the opposite progress resembles retrograde motion;† and therefore *panting height*, *astonish'd thought*, are strained and uncouth expressions, which a writer of taste will avoid.

It is not less strained to apply to a subject in its present state, an epithet that may belong to it in some future state:

*Submersasque* obrue puppes.‡

*Æneid. I. 73.*

And mighty *ruins* fall.

*Iliad, V. 411.*

Impious sons their *mangled* fathers wound.

Another rule regards this figure, that the property of one subject ought not to be bestowed upon another with which that property is incongruous:

\* Iccus, you now envy the *happy* treasures of the Arabians.

† See Chap. 1.

‡ Overwhelm this *sunken* ship.

*King Rich.*—How dare thy joints forget  
To pay their *awful* duty to our presence?

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 3.*

The connection between an awful superior and his submissive dependent is so intimate, that an attribute may readily be transferred from the one to the other; but awfulness cannot be so transferred, because it is inconsistent with submission.

## SECTION VI.

### METAPHOR AND ALLEGORY.

The difference between a metaphor and a simile—The meaning of metaphor—The meaning of allegory—The two rules that govern metaphor and allegory—Of construction—Not agreeable where the resemblance is too faint or too strong—not agreeable if not proportionable—Not to be crowded with minute circumstances—Words literally applicable to the imagined nature of the subject to be used—Different metaphors not to be jumbled—Plain language and metaphor not to be jumbled—Metaphors excluded from common conversation—Improper in severe passions that wholly occupy the mind—Proper when a man struggles to bear up against misfortunes.

A METAPHOR differs from a simile, in form only, not in substance: in a simile, the two subjects are kept distinct in the expression, as well as in the thought; in a metaphor, the two subjects are kept distinct in the thought only, not in the expression. A hero resembles a lion, and, upon that resemblance, many similes have been raised by Homer and other poets. But instead of resembling a lion, let us take the aid of the imagination, and feign or figure the hero to be a lion: by that variation the simile is converted into a metaphor; which is carried on by describing all the qualities of a lion that resemble those of the hero. The fundamental pleasure here, that of resemblance, belongs to the thought. An additional pleasure arises from the expression: the poet, by figuring his hero to be a lion, goes on to describe the lion in appearance, but in reality the hero; and his description is peculiarly beautiful, by expressing the virtues and qualities of the hero in new terms, which, properly speaking, belong not to him, but to the lion. This will better be understood by examples. A family connected with a common parent, resembles a tree, the trunk and branches of which are connected with a common root: but let us suppose, that a family is figured, not barely to be like a tree, but to be a tree; and then the simile will be converted into a metaphor, in the following manner:

Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,  
Were sev'n fair branches, springing from one root:  
Some of these branches by the dest'nies cut:  
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Glo'ster,  
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,  
Is hack'd down, and his summer-leaves all faded,  
By Envy's hand and Murder's bloody axe.

*Richard II. Act I. Sc. 2.*

Figuring human life to be a voyage at sea:

There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current while it serves,  
Or lose our ventures. *Julius Cæsar, Act IV. Sc. 3.*

Figuring glory and honor to be a garland of flowers.

*Hotspur*———Wou'd to heav'n,  
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!  
*Pr. Henry.* I'll make it greater, ere I part from thee,  
And all the budding honors on thy crest  
I'll crop, to make a garland for my head.  
*First Part Henry IV. Act V. Sc. 4.*

Figuring a man who hath acquired great reputation and honour to be a tree full of fruit:

———Oh, boys, this story  
The world may read in me: my body's mark'd  
With Roman swords; and my report was once  
First with the best of note. *Cymbeline* lov'd me;  
And when a soldier was the theme, my name  
Was not far off: then was I as a tree,  
Whose boughs did bend with fruit. But in one night,  
A storm or robbery, call it what you will,  
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay my leaves;  
And left me bare to weather. *Cymbeline, Act III. Sc. 3.*

Blest be thy soul, thou king of shells, said Swaran of the dark-brown shield.  
In peace thou art the gale of spring; in war, the mountain-storm. Take now  
my hand in friendship, thou noble king of Morven. *Fingal.*

Thou dwellest in the soul of Malvina, son of mighty Ossian. My sighs arise  
with the beam of the east: my tears descend with the drops of night. I was a  
lovely tree in thy presence, Oscar, with all my branches round me: but thy death  
came like a blast from the desert, and laid my green head low: the spring returned  
with its showers, but no leaf of mine arose. *Fingal.*

I am aware that the term *metaphor* has been used in a more extensive sense than I give it; but I thought it of consequence, in a disquisition of some intricacy, to confine the term to its proper sense, and to separate from it things that are distinguished by different names. An allegory differs from a metaphor; and what I would choose to call a *figure of speech*, differs from both. I proceed to explain these differences. A metaphor is defined above to be an act of the imagination, figuring one thing to be another. An allegory requires no such operation, nor is one thing figured to be another: it consists in choosing a subject having properties or circumstances resembling those of the principal subject; and the former is described in such a manner as to represent the latter; the subject thus represented is kept out of view; we are left to discover it by reflection; and we are pleased with the discovery, because it is our own work. Quintilian\* gives the following instance of an allegory:

O navis, referent in mare te novi  
Fluctus. O quid agis? fortiter occupa portum.  
*Horat. lib. I. ode 14.*

New floods of strife that swell the main  
Oh ship, shall bring thee out again—  
Oh, wherefore venture? 'tis your fort  
To keep your station in the port.

\* L. 8. cap. 6. sect. 2.

and explains it elegantly in the following words: "Totusque ille Horatii locus, quo navim pro republica, fluctuum tempestates pro bellis civilibus, portum pro pace, atque concordia, dicit."

A finer or more correct allegory is not to be found than the following, in which a vineyard is made to represent God's own people the Jews.

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with its shadow, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all which pass do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard thy right hand hath planted, and the branch thou madest strong for thyself. *Psalms LXXX.*

In a word, an allegory is in every respect similar to an hieroglyphical painting, excepting only that words are used instead of colors. Their effects are precisely the same: a hieroglyphic raises two images in the mind; one seen, which represents one not seen: an allegory does the same; the representative subject is described; and resemblance leads us to apply the description to the subject represented. In a figure of speech, there is no fiction of the imagination employed, as in a metaphor, nor a representative subject introduced, as in an allegory. This figure, as its name implies, regards the expression only, not the thought; and it may be defined, the using of a word in a sense different from what is proper to it. Thus youth, or the beginning of life, is expressed figuratively by *morning of life*: morning is the beginning of the day; and in that view it is employed to signify the beginning of any other series, life especially, the progress of which is reckoned by days.

Figures of speech are reserved for a separate section; but metaphor and allegory are so much connected, that they must be handled together: the rules particularly for distinguishing the good from the bad, are common to both. We shall therefore proceed to these rules, after adding some examples to illustrate the nature of an allegory. Horace, speaking of his love to Pyrrha, which was now extinguished, expresses himself thus:

—Me tabulâ sacer  
Votivâ paries indicat uvida  
Suspendisse potenti  
Vestimenta maris Deo.

*Carm. l. 1. ode 5.*

For me the temple witness bears  
Where I my dropping weeds have hung,  
And left my votive chart behind  
To him that rules both wave and wind.

Again:

Phœbus volentem prælia me loqui,  
Victas et urbes, increpuit lyrâ:  
Ne parva Tyrrhenum per æquor  
Vela darem.

*Carm. l. 4. ode 15.*

Willing to sing upon my lyre,  
The fights we dare, the towers we scale,  
Apollo bade me check my fond desire,  
Nor on the vast Tyrrhenian spread my little sail.



*Queen.* Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,  
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.  
What though the mast be nowethrown overboard,  
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost,  
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood;  
Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet, that he  
Should leave the helm, and, like a fearful lad,  
With tearful eyes, add water to the sea,  
And give more strength to that which hath too much;  
While in his moan the ship splits on the rock,  
Which industry and courage might have sav'd?  
Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this!

*Third Part Henry VI. Act V. Sc. 4.*

*Oroonoko.* Ha! thou hast rous'd  
The lion in his den: he stalks abroad,  
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.  
I find the danger now.

*Oroonoko, Act III. Sc. 2.*

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. He fenced it, gathered out the stones thereof, planted it with the choicest vines, built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.

*Isaiah, V. 1.*

The rules that govern metaphors, and allegories, are of two kinds: the construction of these figures comes under the first kind: the propriety or impropriety of introduction comes under the other. I begin with rules of the first kind; some of which coincide with those already given for similes; some are peculiar to metaphors and allegories.

And, in the first place, it has been observed, that a simile cannot be agreeable where the resemblance is either too strong or too faint. This holds equally in metaphor and allegory; and the reason is the same in all. In the following instances, the resemblance is too faint to be agreeable.

*Malcolm.*———But there's no bottom, none  
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust.

*Macbeth, Act IV. Sc. 3.*

The best way to judge of this metaphor, is to convert it into a simile; which would be bad, because there is scarcely any resemblance between lust and a cistern, or betwixt enormous lust and a large cistern. Again:

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause  
Within the belt of rule.

*Macbeth, Act V. Sc. 2.*

There is no resemblance between a distempered cause and any body that can be confined within a belt.

Again:

Steep me in poverty to the very lips.

*Othello, Act IV. Sc. 2.*

Poverty here must be conceived a fluid, which it resembles not in any manner.

Speaking to Bolingbroke banished for six years :

The sullen passage of thy weary steps  
Esteem a soil wherein thou art to set  
The precious jewel of thy home-return.

*Richard II. Act I. Sc. 3.*

Again :

Here is a letter, lady,  
And every word in it a gaping wound  
Issuing life-blood. *Merchant of Venice, Act III. Sc. 2.*

*Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.\** *Æneid, I. 37.*

The following metaphor is strained beyond all endurance: Timur-bec, known to us by the name of Tamerlane the Great, writes to Bajazet, Emperor of the Ottomans, in the following terms :

Where is the monarch who dares resist us ? where is the potentate who doth not glory in being numbered among our attendants ? As for thee, descended from a Turcoman sailor, since the vessel of thy unbounded ambition hath been wreck'd in the gulf of thy self-love, it would be proper, that thou should'st take in the sails of thy temerity, and cast the anchor of repentance in the port of sincerity and justice, which is the port of safety ; lest the tempest of our vengeance make thee perish in the sea of the punishment thou deservest.

Such strained figures, as observed above,† are not unfrequent in the first dawn of refinement : the mind in a new enjoyment knows no bounds, and is generally carried to excess, till taste and experience discover the proper limits.

Secondly, whatever resemblance subjects may have, it is wrong to put one for another, where they bear no mutual proportion : upon comparing a very high to a very low subject, the simile takes on an air of burlesque ; and the same will be the effect, where the one is imagined to be the other, as in a metaphor ; or made to represent the other, as in an allegory.

Thirdly, these figures, a metaphor especially, ought not to be crowded with many minute circumstances ; for in that case it is scarcely possible to avoid obscurity. A metaphor above all ought to be short : it is difficult, for any time, to support a lively image of a thing being what we know it is not ; and for that reason, a metaphor drawn out to any length, instead of illustrating or enlivening the principal subject, becomes disagreeable by overstraining the mind. Here Cowley is extremely licentious : take the following instance.

Great and wise conqu'ror, who where-e'er  
Thou com'st, doth fortify and settle there !  
Who canst defend as well as get,  
And never hadst one quarter beat up yet ;  
Now thou art in, thou ne'er will part  
With one inch of my vanquish'd heart ;  
For since thou took'st it by assault from me,  
'Tis garrison'd so strong with thoughts of thee,  
It fears no beauteous enemy.

For the same reason, however agreeable long allegories may at first be by their novelty, they never afford any lasting pleasure : witness the

\* So great a weight was it to build up the Roman nation.

† Chap. 19. Comparisons.

*Fairy-Queen*, which with great power of expression, variety of images, and melody of versification, is scarcely ever read a second time.

In the fourth place, the comparison carried on in a simile, being in a metaphor sunk by imagining the principal subject to be that very thing which it only resembles; an opportunity is furnished to describe it in terms taken strictly or literally with respect to its imagined nature. This suggests another rule, that in constructing a metaphor, the writer ought to make use of such words only as are applicable literally to the imagined nature of his subject: figurative words ought carefully to be avoided; for such complicated figures, instead of setting the principal subject in a strong light, involve it in a cloud; and it is well if the reader, without rejecting by the lump, endeavors patiently to gather the plain meaning regardless of the figures:

A stubborn and unconquerable flame  
Creeps in his veins, and drinks the streams of life.

*Lady Jane Grey*, Act 1. Sc. 1.

Copied from Ovid,

Sorbent avidæ præcordia flammæ. *Metamorph.* Lib. IX. 172.

The greedy flames *drink* his heart.

Let us analyze this expression. That a fever may be imagined a flame, I admit; though more than one step is necessary to come at the resemblance: a fever, by heating the body, resembles fire; and it is no stretch to imagine a fever to be a fire: again, by a figure of speech, flame may be put for fire, because they are commonly conjoined; and, therefore, a fever may be termed a flame. But now admitting a fever to be a flame, its effects ought to be explained in words that agree literally to a flame. This rule is not observed here; for a flame *drinks* figuratively only, not properly.

King Henry to his son Prince Henry:

Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,  
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart  
To stab at half an hour of my frail life.

*Second Part Henry IV.* Act IV. Sc. 2.

Such faulty metaphors are pleasantly ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*:

*Physician.* Sir, to conclude, the place you fill has more than amply exacted the talents of a wary pilot; and all these threatening storms, which like impregnate clouds, hover o'er our heads, will, when they on ceare grasp'd but by the eye of reason, melt into fruitful showers of blessings on the people.

*Bayes.* Pray mark that allegory. Is not that good?

*Johnson.* Yes, that grasping of a storm with the eye is admirable.

Act II. Sc. 1.

Fifthly, the jumbling of different metaphors in the same sentence, beginning with one metaphor and ending with another, commonly called a mixt metaphor, ought never to be indulged. Quintilian bears testimony against it in the bitterest terms: "Nam id quoque in primis est custodiendum, ut quo ex genere cœperis translationis, hoc desinas. Multi enim, cum initium a tempestate sumpserunt, incendio aut ruina finiunt: quæ est inconsequentia rerum fœdissima."\*

*L. 8. cap. 6. § 2.*

\* This also must be most cautiously observed, that you end with the kind of

*K. Henry.*——Will you again unknot  
This churlish knot of all-abhorred war,  
And move in that obedient orb again,  
Where you did give a fair and natural light?

*First Part Henry VI. Act V. Sc. 1.*

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune;  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them.

*Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 1.*

In the sixth place, it is unpleasant to join different metaphors in the same period, even where they are preserved distinct: for when the subject is imagined to be first one thing, and then another in the same period without interval, the mind is distracted by the rapid transition; and when the imagination is put on such hard duty, its images are too faint to produce any good effect:

At regina gravi jamdudum saucia cura,  
Vulnus alit venis, et cæco carpitur igni.

*Æneid, IV.*

But anxious cares already seize the queen,  
She fed within her veins a flame unseen.

Motum ex Metello consule civicum,  
Bellique causas, et vitia, et modos,  
Ludumque fortunæ, gravesque  
Principum amicitias, et arma  
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,  
Periculosæ plenum opus alæ,  
Tractas, et incedis per ignes

Subpositos cineri doloso. *Horat. Carm. l. ii. Ode 1.*

The war that rose from civil hate,  
In that Metellian consulate,  
Our vices, measures, and the sport of chance,  
The famous triple league, the Roman shield and lance,  
With gore unexpiated, smeared,  
A work whose fate is to be feared,  
You treat, and on those treacherous ashes tread,  
Beneath whose seeming surface glow the embers dead.

In the last place, it is still worse to jumble together metaphorical and natural expression, so as that the period must be understood in part metaphorically, in part literally; for the imagination cannot follow with sufficient ease changes so sudden and unprepared: a metaphor begun and not carried on has no beauty; and instead of light there is nothing but obscurity and confusion. Instances of such incorrect composition are without number. I shall, for a specimen, select a few from different authors.

Speaking of Britain,

This precious stone set in the sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house  
Against the envy of less happier lands.

*Richard II. Act I. Sc. 1.*

In the first line Britain is figured to be a precious stone: in the following lines, Britain, divested of her metaphorical dress, is presented to the reader in her natural appearance.

These growing feathers, pluck'd from Cæsar's wing,

metaphor with which you begin. For many, when they have commenced with a storm, end with a conflagration, or the fall of a building; which incongruity is most vile.

Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,  
Who else would soar above the view of men,  
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

*Julius Caesar, Act I. Sc. 1.*

Rebus angustis animosus atque  
Fortis adpare: sapienter idem  
Contrahe vento nimium secundo  
Turgida vela.

*Hor.*

When times are hardest, then a face  
Of constancy and spirit wear;  
But wise contract your sails apace  
When once the wind's too fair.

The following is a miserable jumble of expressions, arising from an unsteady view of the subject, between its figurative and natural appearance:

But now from gath'ring clouds destruction pours,  
Which ruins with mad rage our halcyon hours:  
Mists from black jealousies the tempest form,  
Whilst late divisions reinforce the storm. *Dispensary, canto 3.*

To thee, the world it present homage pays,  
The harvest early, but mature the praise.

*Pope's Imitation of Horace, b. ii.*

Oui, sa pudeur n'est que franche grimace,  
Qu'une ombre de vertu qui garde mal la place,  
Et qui s'évanouit, comme l'on peut savoir,  
Aux rayons du soleil qu'une bourse fait voir.

*Molière, l'Étourdi, Act III. Sc. 2.*

Et son feu, depourvu de sens et de lecture,  
S'éteint à chaque pas, faute de nourriture.

*Boileau, l'Art Poétique, Chant 3. l. 319.*

Dryden, in his dedication of the translation of *Juvenal*, says,

When thus, as I may say, before the use of the load-stone, or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage among the moderns, &c.

There is a time when factions, by the vehemence of their own fermentation, stun and disable one another. *Bolingbroke.*

This fault of jumbling the figure and plain expression into one confused mass, is not less common in allegory than in metaphor. Take the following examples:

— Heu! quoties fidem,  
Mutatosque Deos flebit, et aspera  
Nigris æquora ventis  
Emirabitur insolens,  
Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aures,  
Qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem  
Sperat, nescius auræ  
Fallacis.

*Horat. Carm. l. 1. ode 5.*

Alas! how oft shall he protest  
Against his confidence misplaced,  
And love's inconstant powers deplore,  
And wondrous winds, which, as they roar,  
Throw black upon the altered scene—  
Who now so well himself deceives,  
And thee all sunshine, all serene  
For want of better skill believes.

Pour moi sur cette mer, qu'ici bas nous courons,  
 Je songe à me pourvoir d'esquif et d'avirons,  
 A régler mes désirs, à prévenir l'orage,  
 Et sauver, s'il se peut, ma Raison du naufrage.

*Boileau, Épître 5.*

Lord Halifax, speaking of the ancient fabulists: "They (says he) wrote in signs, and spoke in parables: all their fables carry a double meaning; the story is one and entire; the characters the same throughout; not broken or changed, and always conformable to the nature of the creature they introduce. They never tell you, that the dog which snapp'd at a shadow, lost his troop of horse; that would be unintelligible. This is his (Dryden's) new way of telling a story, and confounding the moral and the fable together." After instancing from the hind and panther, he goes on thus: "What relation has the hind to our Saviour; or what notion have we of a panther's Bible? If you say he means the church, how does the church feed on lawns, or range in the forest? Let it be always a church, or always a cloven-footed beast, for we cannot bear his shifting the scene every line."

A few words more upon allegory. Nothing gives greater pleasure than this figure, when the representative subject bears a strong analogy, in all its circumstances, to that which is represented: but the choice is seldom so lucky; the analogy being generally so faint and obscure, as to puzzle and not please. An allegory is still more difficult in painting than in poetry: the former can show no resemblance but what appears to the eye; the latter has many other resources for showing the resemblance. And therefore, with respect to what the Abbe du Bos\* terms mixt allegorical compositions, these may do in poetry; because, in writing, the allegory can easily be distinguished from the historical part: no person, for example, mistakes Virgil's Fame for a real being. But such a mixture in a picture is intolerable; because in a picture the objects must appear all of the same kind, wholly real or wholly emblematical. For this reason, the history of Mary de Medicis, in the palace of Luxembourg, painted by Rubens, is unpleasant by a perpetual jumble of real and allegorical personages, which produce a discordance of parts, and an obscurity upon the whole: witness, in particular, the tablature representing the arrival of Mary de Medicis at Marseilles; where, together with the real personages, the Nereids and Tritons appear sounding their shells: such a mixture of fiction and reality in the same group, is strangely absurd. The picture of Alexander and Roxana, described by Lucian, is gay and fanciful; but it suffers by the allegorical figures. It is not in the wit of man to invent an allegorical representation deviating farther from any shadow of resemblance, than one exhibited by Lewis XIV. *anno* 1664; in which an enormous chariot, intended to represent that of the sun, is dragg'd along, surrounded with men and women, representing the four ages of the world, the celestial signs, the seasons, the hours, &c.; a monstrous composition, suggested probably by Guido's tablature of Aurora, and still more absurd.

\* *Reflections sur la Poesie*, vol. I. sect. 24.

In an allegory as well as in a metaphor, terms ought to be chosen that properly and literally are applicable to the representative subject: nor ought any circumstance to be added that is not proper to the representative subject, however justly it may be applicable properly or figuratively to the principal. The following allegory is therefore faulty:

Ferus et Cupido,  
Semper ardentis acuens sagittas  
Cote cruentâ. Horat. l. II. ode 8.

And love, still whetting on a stone  
His darts in crimson dyed.

For though blood may suggest the cruelty of love, it is an improper or immaterial circumstance in the representative subject: water, not blood, is proper for a whetstone.

We proceed to the next head, which is, to examine in what circumstance these figures are proper, in what improper. This inquiry is not altogether superseded by what is said upon the same subject in the chapter of Comparisons; because upon trial it will be found, that a short metaphor or allegory may be proper, where a simile, drawn out to a greater length, and in its nature more solemn, would scarcely be relished.

And, first, a metaphor, like a simile, is excluded from common conversation, and from the description of ordinary incidents.

Second, in expressing any severe passion that wholly occupies the mind, metaphor is improper. For which reason, the following speech of Macbeth is faulty.

Methought I heard a voice cry, Sleep no more!  
Macbeth doth murder sleep; the innocent sleep;  
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of Care,  
The birth of each day's life, sore Labour's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in Life's feast.— Act II. Sc. 2.

The following example, of deep despair, beside the highly figurative style, has more the air of raving than of sense:

*Calista.* Is it the voice of thunder, or my father?  
Madness! Confusion! let the storm come on,  
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me,  
Dash my devoted bark; ye surges, break it;  
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.  
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,  
Peace shall return, and all be calm again. *Fair Penitent, Act IV.*

The metaphor I next introduce, is sweet and lively, but it suits not a fiery temper inflamed with passion: parables are not the language of wrath venting itself without restraint:

*Chamont.* You took her up a little tender flower,  
Just sprouted on a bank, which the next frost  
Had nip'd; and with a careful loving hand,  
Transplanted her into your own fair garden,  
Where the sun always shines: there long she flourish'd,  
Grew sweet to sense and lovely to the eye,  
Till at the last a cruel spoiler came,  
Cropt this fair rose, and rifled all its sweetness,  
Then cast it like a loathsome weed away. *Orphan, Act IV.*



The following speech, full of imagery, is not natural in grief and dejection of mind :

*Gonsalez.* O my son! from the blind dotage  
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.  
For thee I've been ambitious, base and bloody :  
For thee I've plung'd into this sea of sin ;  
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,  
While t'other bore the crown (to wreath thy brow,)  
Whose weight has sunk me ere I reach'd the shore.

*Mourning Bride, Act V. Sc. 6.*

There is an enchanting picture of deep distress in *Macbeth*,\* where *Macduff* is represented lamenting his wife and children, inhumanly murdered by the tyrant. Stung to the heart with the news, he questions the messenger over and over: not that he doubted the fact, but that his heart revolted against so cruel a misfortune. After struggling some time with his grief, he turns from his wife and children to their savage butcher; and then gives vent to his resentment, but still with manliness and dignity:

O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,  
And braggart with my tongue. But, gentle Heav'n!  
Cut short all intermission; front to front  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;  
Within my sword's length set him—If he 'scape,  
Then Heav'n forgive him too.

The whole scene is a delicious picture of human nature. One expression only seems doubtful: in examining the messenger, *Macduff* expresses himself thus:

He hath no children—all my pretty ones!  
Did you say, all? what, all? Oh, hell-kite! all?  
What, all my pretty little chickens and their dam,  
At one fell swoop!

Metaphorical expression, I am sensible, may sometimes be used with grace, where a regular simile would be intolerable: but there are situations so severe and dispiriting, as not to admit even the slightest metaphor. It requires great delicacy of taste to determine with firmness, whether the present case be of that kind: I incline to think it is; and yet I would not willingly alter a single word of this admirable scene.

But metaphorical language is proper when a man struggles to bear with dignity or decency a misfortune however great: the struggle agitates and animates the mind:

*Wolsey.* Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,  
And then he falls as I do.

*Henry VIII. Act III. Sc. 2*

\* Act IV. Sc. 3.

## SECTION VII.

## FIGURE OF SPEECH

The using of a word in a sense which is not proper to it—Two objects presented, the principal and the accessory—Aggrandizes its object—Prevents the familiarity of proper names—Enriches and renders language more copious.

IN the section immediately foregoing, a figure of speech is defined, "The using of a word in a sense different from what is proper to it;" and the new or uncommon sense of the word is termed *the figurative sense*. The figurative sense must have a relation to that which is proper; and the more intimate the relation is, the figure is the more happy. How ornamental this figure is to language, will not be readily imagined by any one who has not given peculiar attention; and therefore I shall endeavor to unfold its capital beauties and advantages. In the first place, a word used figuratively or in a new sense, suggests at the same time the sense it commonly bears: and thus it has the effect to present two objects; one signified by the figurative sense, which may be termed *the principal object*; and one signified by the proper sense which may be termed *accessory*: the principal makes a part of the thought; the accessory is merely ornamental. In this respect, a figure of speech is precisely similar to concordant sounds in music, which without contributing to the melody, makes it harmonious. I explain myself by examples. *Youth*, by a figure of speech, is termed *the morning of life*. This expression signifies *youth*, the principal object, which enters into the thought: it suggests, at the same time, the proper sense of *morning*; and this accessory object, being in itself beautiful, and connected by resemblance to the principal object, is not a little ornamental. *Imperious ocean* is an example of a different kind, where an attribute is expressed figuratively: together with *stormy*, the figurative meaning of the epithet *imperious*, there is suggested its proper meaning, viz. the stern authority of a despotic prince; and these two are strongly connected by resemblance. Upon this figurative power of words, Vida descants with elegance:

Nonne vides, verbis ut veris sæpe relictis  
 Accersant simulata, aliundeque nomina porro  
 Transportent, aptentque aliis ea rebus; ut ipse,  
 Exuviasque novas, res, insolitosque colores  
 Indutæ, sæpe externi mirentur amictus  
 Unde illi, lætæque aliena luce fruantur,  
 Mutatoque habitu, nec jam sua nomina valent?  
 Sæpe ideo, cum bella canunt, incendia credas  
 Cernere, diluviumque ingens surgentibus undis  
 Contra etiam Martis pugnas imitabitur ignis,  
 Cum furit accensis acies Vulcania campis.  
 Nec turbato oritur quondam minor sequore pugna:  
 Confligunt animosi Euri certamine vasto  
 Inter se, pugnantque adversis molibus undæ.  
 Usque adeo passim sua res insignia lætæ  
 Permutantque, juvantque vicissim; et mutua sese  
 Altera in alterius transformat protinus ora.

**Tum specie capti gaudent spectare legentes:  
Nam diversa simul datur è re cernere eadem  
Multarum simulacra animo subeuntia rerum.**

*Poet. lib. III. l. 44.*

See how the poet banishes with grace  
A native term to give a stranger place!  
From different images with just success  
He clothes his matter in the borrowed dress:  
The borrowed dress the things themselves admire,  
And wonder whence they drew the strange attire;  
Proud of their ravished spoils, they now disclaim  
Their former color, and their genuine name,  
And in another garb more beauteous grown,  
Prefer the foreign habit to their own.  
Oft as he paints a battle on the plain,  
The battle's imaged by the roaring main;  
Now he the fight a fiery deluge names,  
That pours along the fields a flood of flames;  
In airy conflict now the winds appear,  
Alarm the deeps, and wage the stormy war;  
To the fierce shock th' embattled tempests pour,  
Waves charge on waves, th' encountering billows roar.  
Thus in a varied dress the subject shines,  
By turns the objects shift their proper signs;  
From shape to shape alternately they run,  
To borrow others' charms, and lend their own;  
Pleased with the borrowed charms, the readers find  
A crowd of different images combined,  
Rise from a single object to the mind.

IN the next place, this figure possesses a signal power of aggrandizing an object, by the following means. Words which have no original beauty but what arises from their sound, acquire an adventitious beauty from their meaning: a word signifying any thing that is agreeable, becomes by that means agreeable; for the agreeableness of the object is communicated to its name.\* This acquired beauty by the force of custom, adheres to the word even when used figuratively; and the beauty received from the thing it properly signifies, is communicated to the thing which it is made to signify figuratively. Consider the foregoing expression *Imperious ocean*, how much more elevated it is than *Stormy ocean*.

Thirdly, this figure has a happy effect by preventing the familiarity of proper names. The familiarity of a proper name, is communicated to the thing it signifies by means of their intimate connection; and the thing is thereby brought down in our feeling.† This bad effect is prevented by using a figurative word instead of one that is proper; as, for example, when we express the sky by terming it *the blue vault of heaven*; for though no work of art can compare with the sky in grandeur, the expression however is relished, because it prevents the object from being brought down by the familiarity of its proper name. With respect to the degrading familiarity of proper names, Vida has the following passage:

\* See Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 5.

† I have often regretted, that a factious spirit of opposition to the reigning family makes it necessary in public worship to distinguish the king by his proper name. One will scarce imagine who has not made the trial, how much better it sounds to pray for our sovereign lord the king, without any addition.

Hinc si dura mihi passus dicendus Ulysses,  
 Non illum vero memorabo nomine, sed qui  
 Et mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes,  
 Naufragus everas post sæva incendia Trojam.

Poet. lib. II. l. 46.

Thus great Ulysses' toils were I to choose,  
 For the main theme that should employ my muse;  
 By his long labors of immortal fame,  
 Should shine my hero, but conceal his name;  
 As one, who lost at sea, had nations seen,  
 And marked their towns, their manners, and their men,  
 Since Troy was levelled to the dust by Greece.—

Lastly, by this figure language is enriched, and rendered more copious; in which respect, were there no other, a figure of speech is a happy invention. This property is finely touched by Vida:

Quinetiam agricolas ea fandi nota voluptas  
 Exercet, dum læta seges, dum trudere gemmas  
 Incipiunt vites, sitientiaque ætheris imbrem  
 Prata bibunt, ridentque satis surgentibus agri.  
 Hanc vulgo speciem propriæ penuria vocis  
 Intulit, indictisque urgens in rebus egestas.  
 Quippe ubi se vera ostendebant nomina nusquam,  
 Fas erat hinc atque hinc transferre simillima veris.

Poet. lib. III. l. 90.

Ev'én the rough hinds delight in such a strain,  
 When the glad harvest waves with golden grain,  
 And thirsty meadows drink the pearly rain;  
 On the proud vine her purple gems appear;  
 The smiling fields rejoice, and hail the pregnant year.  
 First from necessity the figure sprung,  
 For, things, that would not suit our scanty tongue,  
 When no true names were offered to the view,  
 Those they transferred that bordered on the true;  
 Thence by degrees the noble license grew.

The beauties I have mentioned belong to every figure of speech. Several other beauties peculiar to one or other sort, I shall have occasion to remark afterwards.

Not only subjects, but qualities, actions, effects, may be expressed figuratively. Thus, as to subjects, *the gates of breath* for the lips, *the watery kingdom* for the ocean. As to qualities, *fierce* for stormy, in the expression *Fierce winter*: *Altus* for *profundus*; *Altus puteus*, *Altum mare*; *Breathing* for *perspiring*; *Breathing plants*. Again, as to actions, the sea *rages*, Time will *melt* her frozen thoughts, Time *kills* grief. An effect is put for the cause, as *lux* for the sun; and a cause for the effect, as *boum labores* for corn. The relation of resemblance is one plentiful source of figures of speech; and nothing is more common than to apply to one object the name of another that resembles it in any respect: height, size, and worldly greatness, resemble not each other; but the emotions they produce resemble each other, and prompted by this resemblance, we naturally express worldly greatness by height or size: one feels a certain uneasiness in seeing a great depth; and hence depth is made to express any thing disagreeable by excess, as *depth* of grief, *depth* of despair: again, height of place, and time long past, produce similar feelings; and hence the expression, *Ut altius repetam*: distance in past time,

producing a strong feeling, is put for any strong feeling. *Nihil mihi antiquius nostra amicitia*: shortness with relation to space, for shortness with relation to time, *Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*: suffering a punishment resembles paying a debt; hence *pendere penas*. In the same manner light may be put for glory, sunshine for prosperity, and weight for importance.

Many words, originally figurative, having by long and constant use, lost their figurative power, are degraded to the inferior rank of proper terms. Thus the words that express the operations of the mind, have in all languages been originally figurative: the reason holds in all, that when these operations came first under consideration, there was no other way of describing them than by what they resembled: it was not practicable to give them proper names, as may be done to objects that can be ascertained by sight and touch. A *soft* nature, *jarring* tempers, *weight* of wo, *pompous* phrase, *beget* compassion, *assuage* grief, *break* a vow, *bend* the eye downward, *shower* down curses, *drown'd* in tears, *wrapt* in joy, *warm'd* with eloquence, *loaded* with spoils, and a thousand other expressions of the like nature, have lost their figurative sense. Some terms there are, that cannot be said to be either altogether figurative or altogether proper: originally figurative, they are tending to simplicity, without having lost altogether their figurative power. Virgil's *Regina saucia cura*, is perhaps one of these expressions: with ordinary readers, *saucia* will be considered as expressing simply the effect of grief; but one of a lively imagination will exalt the phrase into a figure.

For epitomising this subject, and at the same time for giving a clear view of it, I cannot think of a better method, than to present to the reader a list of the several relations upon which figures of speech are commonly founded. This list I divide into two tables: one of subjects expressed figuratively, and one of attributes.

#### FIRST TABLE.

##### *Subjects expressed figuratively.*

1. A word proper to one subject employed figuratively to express a resembling subject.

There is no figure of speech so frequent, as what is derived from the relation of resemblance. Youth, for example, is signified figuratively by the *morning* of life. The life of a man resembles a natural day in several particulars: the morning is the beginning of day, youth the beginning of life; the morning is cheerful, so is youth, &c. By another resemblance, a bold warrior is termed the *thunderbolt* of war; a multitude of troubles, a *sea* of troubles.

This figure, above all others, affords pleasure to the mind by variety of beauties. Besides the beauties above mentioned, common to all sorts, it possesses in particular the beauty of a metaphor or of a simile: a figure of speech built upon resemblance, suggests always a comparison between the principal subject and the accessory; whereby every good effect of a metaphor or simile, may in a short and lively manner, be produced by this figure of speech.

2. A word proper to the effect employed figuratively to express the cause.

*Lux* for the sun. *Shadow* for cloud. A helmet is signified by the expression *glittering terror*. A tree by *shadow* or *umbrage*. Hence the expression:

Nec habet Pelion umbras.\*

Ovid.

Where the dun umbrage hangs.

Spring, l. 1023.

A wound is made to signify an arrow :

Vulnere non pedibus te consequar.†

Ovid.

There is a peculiar force and beauty in this figure: the word which signifies figuratively the principal subject, denotes it to be a cause by suggesting the effect.

3. A word proper to the cause, employed figuratively to express the effect.

*Bourne* labours, for corn. *Sorrow* or *grief*, for tears.

Again, Ulysses veil'd his pensive head ;  
Again, unmann'd, a show'r of *sorrow* shed.

Streaming *Grief* his faded cheek bedew'd.

*Blindness* for darkness :

Cæcis erramus in undis.‡

Æneid, III. 200.

There is a peculiar energy in this figure, similar to that in the former: the figurative name denotes the subject to be an effect, by suggesting its cause.

4. Two things being intimately connected, the proper name of the one employed figuratively to signify the other.

*Day* for light. *Night* for darkness; and hence, A sudden night.  
*Winter* for a storm at sea :

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum,  
Emissamque Hyemem sensit Neptunus.

Æneid, I. 128.

Meantime imperial Neptune heard the sound  
Of raging winter breaking on the ground.

This last figure would be too bold for a British writer, as a storm at sea is not inseparably connected with winter in this climate.

5. A word proper to an attribute, employed figuratively to denote the subject.

*Youth* and *beauty* for those who are young and beautiful .

Youth and beauty shall be laid in dust.

*Majesty* for the King :

What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form,  
In which the *Majesty* of buried Denmark  
Did sometime march ?

Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 1.

———Or have ye chosen this place  
After the toils of battle, to repose  
Your weary'd *virtue*.

Paradise Lost.

\* Nor hath Pelion shadows.

† I will follow thee with a wound, not with feet.

‡ We wander midst the blind waves.

*Verdure* for a green field. *Summer*, l. 301.  
Speaking of cranes,

The pigmy nations wounds and death they bring,  
And all the *war* descends upon the wing. *Iliad*, III. 10.

Cool *age* advances venerably wise. *Iliad*, III. 149.

The peculiar beauty of this figure arises from suggesting an attribute that embellishes the subject, or puts it in a stronger light.

6. A complex term employed figuratively to denote one of the component parts.

*Funus*\* for a dead body. *Burial* for a grave.

7. The name of one of the component parts instead of the complex term.

*Tædæ†* for a marriage. The *East* for a country situated east from us. *Jovis vestigia servat,‡* for imitating Jupiter in general.

8. A word signifying time or place, employed figuratively to denote what is connected with it.

*Clime* for a nation, or for a constitution of government: hence the expression *Merciful clime*, *Fleecy winter* for snow, *Seculum felix.§*

9 A part for the whole.

The *Pole* for the earth. The *head* for the person:

Triginta minas pro capite tuo dedi.|| *Plautus*.

*Tergum* for the man:

Fugiens tergum.¶ *Ovid*.

*Vultus* for the man:

Jam fulgor armorum fugaces  
Terret equos, equitumque vultus. *Horat*.

————— Men in armor bright,  
The routed horse and horsemen with their lightnings fright.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam chari capitis? *Horat*.

What can abash the mournful strains  
Or bounds prescribe to grief like this  
For those most precious dear remains.

Dumque virent *genua*?\*\* *Horat*.

Thy growing virtues justify'd my cares,  
And promis'd comfort to my *silver hairs*. *Iliad*, IX. 616.

—————Forthwith from the pool he rears  
His mighty *stature*. *Paradise Lost*.

The silent *heart* with grief assails *Parnell*.

The peculiar beauty of this figure consists in marking that part which makes the greatest figure.

10. The name of the container, employed figuratively to signify what is contained.

*Grove* for the birds in it, *Vocal grove*. *Ships* for the seamen.

\* A funeral. † A marriage torch. ‡ He follows the steps of Jove.

§ A happy age.

|| I gave thirty pounds for thy head.

¶ Fleeing from his back.

\*\* Whilst my knees have strength.



*Agonizing ships. Mountains* for the sheep pasturing upon them, *Bleating mountains. Zacynthus, Ithaca, &c.* for the inhabitants. *Ex mæstis domibus*, Livy.

11. The name of the sustainer, employed figuratively to signify what is sustained.

*Altar* for the sacrifice. *Field* for the battle fought upon it, *Well-fought field*.

12. The name of the materials, employed figuratively to signify the things made of them.

*Ferrum* for *gladius*.

13. The names of the Heathen deities, employed figuratively to signify what they patronise.

*Jove* for the air, *Mars* for war, *Venus* for beauty, *Cupid* for love, *Ceres* for corn, *Neptune* for the sea, *Vulcan* for fire.

This figure bestows great elevation upon the subject; and therefore ought to be confined to the higher strains of poetry.

## SECOND TABLE.

### *Attributes expressed figuratively.*

When two attributes are connected, the name of the one may be employed figuratively to express the other.

1. Purity and virginity are attributes of the same person: hence the expression, *Virgin snow*, for pure snow.

2. A word signifying properly an attribute of one subject, employed figuratively to express a resembling attribute of another subject.

*Tottering state. Imperious ocean. Angry flood. Raging tempest. Shallow fears.*

My sure divinity shall bear the shield,  
And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field. *Odyssey*, XX. 61.

*Black omen*, for an omen that portends bad fortune.

*Ater odor.*

*Virgil.*

The peculiar beauty of this figure arises from suggesting a comparison.

3. A word proper to the subject, employed to express one of its attributes.

*Mens* for *intellectus*. *Mens* for a resolution:

*Istam, oro, exue mentem.*

4. When two subjects have a resemblance by a common quality, the name of the one subject may be employed figuratively to denote that quality in the other.

*Summer life* for agreeable life.

5. The name of the instrument made to signify the power of employing it.

———— Melpomene, cui liquidam pater  
Vocem cum *cithæra*, dedit.

The ample field of figurative expression displayed in these tables,

affords great scope for reasoning. Several of the observations relating to metaphor, are applicable to figures of speech: these I shall slightly retouch, with some additions peculiarly adapted to the present subject.

In the first place, as the figure under consideration is built upon relation, we find from experience, and it must be obvious from reason, that the beauty of the figure depends on the intimacy of the relation between the figurative and proper sense of the word. A slight resemblance, in particular, will never make this figure agreeable: the expression, for example, *Drink down a secret*, for listening to a secret with attention, is harsh, and uncouth, because there is scarcely any resemblance between *listening* and *drinking*. The expression *weighty crack*, used by Ben Jonson for *loud crack*, is worse if possible: a loud sound has not the slightest resemblance to a piece of matter that is weighty. The following expression of Lucretius is not less faulty, "*Et lepido quæ sunt fucata sonore.*" l. 645.

————— Sed magis  
Pugnas et exactos tyrannos  
Densum humeris *bibit* aure vulgus.  
*Horat. Carm. l. 2. Ode 13.*

————— But most  
The attention and the thick'ning throng augment,  
To hear of patriot fights, and kings in exile sent.  
Phemius! let acts of gods and heroes old,  
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,  
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ,  
Such the pleas'd ear *will drink* with silent joy. *Odyssey, l. 433*  
*Streptumque exterritus lausit.* *Æneid, VI. 559*  
And terrified, *drank* the tumult.

————— Write, my Queen,  
And with mine eyes I'll *drink* the words you send.  
*Cymbeline, Act I. Sc. 2*  
As thus th' effulgence tremulous I *drink*. *Summer, l. 1684.*  
*Neque audit currus habenas.* *Georg. l. 514.*  
Nor does the chariot *hear* the reins.

O Prince! (Lycaon's valiant son reply'd),  
As thine the steeds, be thine the task to guide.  
The horses practis'd to their lord's command,  
Shall *hear* the rein, and answer to thy hand. *Iliad, V. 288.*

The following figures of speech seem altogether wild and extravagant, the figurative and proper meaning having no connection whatever. *Moving* softness, *Freshness breathes*, *Breathing prospect*, *Flowing spring*, *Dewy light*, *Lucid coolness*, and many others of this false coin, may be found in Thomson's *Seasons*.

Secondly, the proper sense of the word ought to bear some proportion to the figurative sense, and not soar much above it, nor sink much below it. This rule, as well as the foregoing, is finely illustrated by Vida:

Hæc adeo cum sint, cum fas audere poetis  
Multa modis multis; tamen observare memento  
Si quando haud propriis rem mavis dicere verbis,

Translatisque aliunde notis, longeque petitis,  
 Ne nimiam ostendas, querendo talia, curam.  
 Namque aliqui exercent vim duram, et rebus iniquis  
 Nativam eripiunt formam, indignantibus ipais  
 Invitasque jubent alienos sumere vultus  
 Haud magis imprudens mihi erit, et luminis expers,  
 Qui puero ingentes habitus det ferre gigantis,  
 Quam si quis stabula alta lares appellet equinos,  
 Aut crines magnæ genitricis gramina dicat.

*Poet. III. 143.*

But though our fond indulgence grants the muse  
 A thousand liberties in different views,  
 Whene'er you choose an image to express  
 In foreign terms, and scorn the native dress;  
 Yet be discreet, nor strain the point too far,  
 Let the transition still enforced appear,  
 Nor e'er discover an excess of care:  
 For some, we know, with awkward violence  
 Quite change the genuine figure, and deface  
 The native shape with every living grace;  
 And force unwilling objects to put on  
 An alien face, and features not their own.  
 A low conceit in disproportioned terms,  
 Looks like a boy dressed up in giant's arms;  
 Blind to the truth, all reason they exceed,  
 Who name a stall the palace of the steed,  
 Or grass the tresses of great Rhæa's head.

Thirdly, in a figure of speech, every circumstance ought to be avoided that agrees with the proper sense only, not the figurative sense; for it is the latter that expresses the thought, and the former serves for no other purpose than to make harmony:

Zacynthus green with ever-shady groves,  
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves;  
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,  
 They press the Hymenean rite abhorr'd. *Odyssey, XIX. 152.*

Zacynthus here standing figuratively for the inhabitants, the description of the island is quite out of place: it puzzles the reader, by making him doubt whether the word ought to be taken in its proper or figurative sense.

Write, my Queen,  
 And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,  
 Though ink be made of gall. *Cymbeline, Act I. Sc. 2.*

The disgust one has to drink ink in reality, is not to the purpose where the subject is drinking ink figuratively.

In the fourth place, to draw consequences from a figure of speech, as if the word were to be understood literally, is a gross absurdity, for it is confounding truth with fiction.

Be Moubray's sins so heavy in his bosom,  
 That they may break his foaming courser's back,  
 And throw the rider headlong in the lists,  
 A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford.

*Richard II. Act I. Sc. 2.*

Sin may be imagined heavy in a figurative sense: but weight in a proper sense belongs to the accessory only; and therefore to describe the effects of weight, is to desert the principal subject, and to convert the accessory into a principal

**Cromwell.** How does your Grace?

**Wolsy.** Why, well;

Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.  
I know myself now, and I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities,  
A still and quiet conscience. The King has cur'd me,  
I humbly thank his Grace; and from these shoulders,  
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken  
A load would sink a navy, too much honor.

*Henry VIII. Act III. Sc. 2.*

**Ulysses speaking of Hector:**

I wonder now how yonder city stands,  
When we have here the base and pillar by us.

*Troilus and Cressida, Act IV. Sc. 5.*

**Othello.** No; my heart is turn'd to stone: I strike it, and it hurts my hand.

*Othello, Act IV. Sc. 1.*

Not less, even in this despicable now,  
Than when my name fill'd Afric with affrights,  
And froze your hearts beneath your torrid zone.

*Don Sebastian, King of Portugal, Act I.*

How long a space, since first I lov'd, it is!

To look into a glass I fear,  
And am surpris'd with wonder when I miss  
Gray hairs and wrinkles there.

*Cowley, Vol. I. p. 86.*

I chose the flourishing'st tree in all the park.

With freshest boughs and fairest head;

I cut my love into his gentle bark,

And in three days behold 'tis dead;

My very written flames so violent be,

They've burnt and wither'd up the tree

*Cowley, Vol. I. p. 136.*

Ah, mighty Love, that it were inward heat

Which made this precious limbeck sweat!

But what, alas! ah what does it avail,

That she weeps tears so wondrous cold,

As scarce the ass's hoof can hold,

So cold, that I admire they fall not hail.

*Cowley, Vol. I. p. 132.*

Such a play of words is pleasant in a ludicrous poem.

**Almeria.** O Alphonso, Alphonso!

Devouring seas have wash'd thee from my sight,

No time shall rase thee from my memory;

No, I will live to be thy monument:

The cruel ocean is no more thy tomb;

But in my heart thou art interr'd.

*Mourning Bride, Act I. Sc. 1.*

This would be very right, if there were any inconsistency, in being interred in one place really, and in another place figuratively.

Je crains que cette saison

Ne nous amène la peste;

La gueule du chien céleste

Vomit feu sur l'horison.

Afin que je m'en délivre,

Je veux lire ton gros livre

Jusques au dernier feuillet:

Tout ce que ta plume trace,

Robinet, a de la glace

A faire trembler Juillet.

*Meynard*

In me tota ruens Vénus  
Cyprum deseruit. *Horat. Carm. l. I. Ode 19.*

Her Cyprus now deserting quite,  
Venus on me careers with all her might.

From considering that a word used in a figurative sense suggests at the same time its proper meaning, we discover a fifth rule, that we ought not to employ a word in a figurative sense, the proper sense of which is inconsistent or incongruous with the subject: for every inconsistency, and even incongruity, though in the expression only and not real, is unpleasant:

Interea genitor Tyberini ad fluminis undam  
Vulnera siccabat lymphis

*Æneid, X. 833.*

Meantime his father, now no father stood,  
And dried his wounds by Tyber's yellow flood.

Tres adeo incertos cæca caligine soles  
Erramus pelago, totidem sine sidere noctea.

*Æneid, III. 903.*

Three starless nights the doubtful navy stays  
Without distinction, and three sunless days.

The foregoing rule may be extended to form a sixth, that no epithet ought to be given to the figurative sense of a word that agrees not also with its proper sense:

————— Dicat Opuntiae  
Frater Megillæ, quo beatus  
Vulnere.

*Horat. Carm. lib. I. Ode 27.*

Let the brother of the Opuntian fair  
Rather his lovesick joys, and darling flame declare.

Parcus deorum cultor, et infrequens,  
Insanientis dum sapientiæ  
Consultus erro.

*Horat. Carm. lib. I. Ode 34.*

A sparing and unfrequent guest,  
In Jove's high temple at the best,  
While mad philosophy my mind pursued.

Seventhly, the crowding into one period or thought of different figures of speech, is not less faulty than crowding metaphors in that manner: the mind is distracted in the quick transition from one image to another, and is puzzled instead of being pleased:

I am of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music-vows.

*Hamlet.*

My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound.

*Odyssey, l. 439.*

————— Ah miser,  
Quantâ laboras in *Charybdi*!  
Digne puer meliore *flamma*.  
Que saga, quis te solvere *Thessalis*  
Magus *venenis*, quis poterit deus?  
Vix illigatum te triformi  
Pegasus expediet *Chimerâ*.

*Horat. Carm. lib. I. Ode 27.*

Ah wretch, how thou art hampered in a strait—  
A lad whose matchless worth deserved a better fate.

What sorceress, what magic art,  
What power divine can ease thy smart!

E'en Pegasus to clear thee will be loth  
From one composed of whimsy, wantonness and wrath.

Eighthly, if crowding figures be bad, it is still worse to graft one figure upon another : for instance,

While his keen falchion drinks the warriors' lives. *Iliad*, XI. 211.

A falchion drinking the warriors' blood is a figure built upon resemblance, which is passable. But then in the expression, *lives* is again put for *blood* ; and by thus grafting one figure upon another, the expression is rendered obscure and unpleasant.

Ninthly, intricate and involved figures that can scarcely be analyzed, or reduced to plain language, are least of all tolerable :

Votis incendimus aras. *Æneid*, III. 279

We inflame the altars with vows.

————— Onerantque canistris  
Dona laboratæ Cereris. *Æneid*, VIII. 180

They load the baskets with the gifts of labored Ceres.

Vulcan to the Cyclopes :

Arma acri facienda viro : nunc viribus usus,  
Nunc manibus rapidis, omni nunc arte magistra :  
*Præcipitate moras.* *Æneid*, VIII. 441.

Arms for a hero forge—arms that require  
Your force—~~hasten~~ *delay*—prepare your fire.

————— Huic gladio, perque ærea suta  
Per tunicam squalentem auro, latus ~~auris~~ apertum.  
*Æneid*, X. 313

But armor scaled with gold was no defence  
Against the fated sword which opened wide  
His plated shield and ~~drank~~ his open side.

Semotique prius tarda necessitas  
Lethi, corripuit gradum. *Horat. Carm. lib. I. Ode 3.*

And for a long delay at first designed  
The last extremity advanced  
And urged the march of death, and all his pangs enhanced.

Scribêris Vario fortis, et hostium  
Victor, Mæonii carminis *alite.*  
*Horat. Carm. lib. I. Ode 6.*

Brave and victorious in the fight  
Our Varius with Mæonian flight  
Shall thine achievements blaze.

Else shall our fates be number'd with the dead. *Iliad*, V. 294.

Commatural death the fate of war confounds.  
*Iliad*, VIII. 85. and XI. 117.

Speaking of Proteus,

Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,  
The mimic force of every savage shape. *Odyssey*, IV. 563.

Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen  
The piteous object of a prostrate queen. *Ibid.* IV. 952.

The mingling tempest waves its gloom. *Autumn*, 337.

A various sweetness swells the gentle race. *Ibid.* 640.

A sober calm fleeces unbounded ether. *Ibid.* 967.

The distant waterfall swells in the breeze. *Winter*, 738.

In the tenth place, when a subject is introduced by its proper name, it is absurd to attribute to it the properties of a different subject to which the word is sometimes applied in a figurative sense:

Hear me, oh Neptune! thou whose arms are hurl'd  
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

*Odyssey*, IX. 617.

Neptune is here introduced personally, and not figuratively for the ocean: the description therefore, which is only applicable to the latter, is altogether improper.

It is not sufficient, that a figure of speech be regularly constructed, and be free from blemish: it requires taste to discern when it is proper, and when improper; and taste, I suspect is our only guide. One, however, may gather from reflection and experience, that ornaments and graces suit not any of the dispiriting passions, nor are proper for expressing any thing grave and important. In familiar conversation, they are in some measure ridiculous: Prospero, in the *Tempest*, speaking to his daughter Miranda, says,

The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance,  
And say what thou seest yond.

No exception can be taken to the justness of the figure; and circumstances may be imagined to make it proper; but it is certainly not proper in familiar conversation.

In the last place, though figures of speech have a charming effect when accurately constructed and properly introduced, they ought, however, to be scattered with a sparing hand: nothing is more luscious, and nothing consequently more satiating, than redundant ornaments of any kind.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### NARRATION AND DESCRIPTION.

Writers should choose subjects adapted to their genius—In history, the reflections to be chaste and solid—The commencement of an epic poem to be modest—Subjects intended for entertainment solely, to be described as they appear, and not as they really are—Objects in both narration and description, to be painted with great accuracy—A useless circumstance to be suppressed—The power of a simple circumstance happily selected—The drawing of characters, the master stroke in description—In this Tacitus, Shakspeare, and Ossian excel—Verbal dress—The emotion raised by the sound and the sense to be concordant—A stronger impression made by an incident upon an eye-witness than when heard at second hand—The effect of abstract or general terms in composition for amusement, not good—In the fine arts, the capital object to be placed in the strongest point of view—A concise comprehensive style, a great ornament in narration—Tautology to be avoided—An object ugly to the sight, not so when represented by colors or by words—Illustrated, from painting, and from language.

HORACE, and many critics after him, exhort writers to choose a subject adapted to their genius. Such observations would multiply rules of criticism without end; and at any rate belong not to the



present work, the object of which is human nature in general, and what is common to the species. But though the choice of a subject comes not under such a plan, the manner of execution comes under it; because the manner of execution is subjected to general rules, derived from principles common to the species. These rules, as they concern the things expressed as well as the language or expression, require a division of this chapter into two parts; first of thoughts, and next of words. I pretend not to justify this division as entirely accurate: for in discoursing of thoughts, it is difficult to abstract altogether from the words; and still more difficult, in discoursing of words, to abstract altogether from the thought.

The first rule is, that in history the reflections ought to be chaste and solid; for while the mind is intent upon truth, it is little disposed to the operations of the imagination. Strada's *Belgic History* is full of poetical images, which discording with the subject, are unpleasant; and they have a still worse effect, by giving an air of fiction to a genuine history. Such flowers ought to be scattered with a sparing hand, even in epic poetry; and at no rate are they proper, till the reader be warmed, and by an enlivened imagination be prepared to relish them: in that state of mind they are agreeable; but while we are sedate and attentive to an historical chain of facts, we reject with disdain, every fiction. This *Belgic History* is indeed wofully vicious both in matter and in form: it is stuffed with frigid and unmeaning reflections; and its poetical flashes, even laying aside their impropriety, are mere tinsel.

Second, Vida,\* following Horace, recommends a modest commencement of an epic poem; giving for a reason, that the writer ought to husband his fire. This reason has weight; but what is said above suggests a reason still more weighty: bold thoughts and figures are never relished till the mind be heated and thoroughly engaged, which is not the reader's case at the commencement. Homer introduces not a single simile in the first book of the *Iliad*, nor in the first book of the *Odyssey*. On the other hand, Shakespeare begins one of his plays with a sentiment too bold for the most heated imagination:

*Bedford.* Hung be the heav'ns with black, yield day to night!  
Comets, importing change of times and states,  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars,  
That have consented unto Henry's death!  
Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!  
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

*First Part Henry VI.*

The passage with which Strada begins his history, is too poetical for a subject of that kind; and at any rate too high for the beginning of a grave performance. A third reason ought to have no less influence than either of the former, that a man, who, upon his first appearance, strains to make a figure, is too ostentatious to be relished. Hence the first sentences of a work ought to be short, natural and simple. Cicero, in his oration *pro Archia poeta*, errs against this

\* Poet. lib. II. l. 30.

rule: his reader is out of breath at the very first period; which seems never to end. Burnet begins the History of his Own Times with a period long and intricate.

A third rule or observation is, that where the subject is intended for entertainment solely, not for instruction, a thing ought to be described as it appears, not as it is in reality. In running, for example, the impulse upon the ground is proportioned, in some degree, to the celerity of motion: though in appearance it is otherwise for a person in swift motion seems to skim the ground, and scarcely to touch it. Virgil, with great taste, describes quick running according to appearance; and raises an image far more lively than by adhering scrupulously to truth:

Hos super advenit Volscæ de gente Camilla,  
Agmen agens equitum et florentes ære catervas,  
Bellatrix: non illa colo calathivæ Minervæ  
Fœmineas assueta manus; sed prælia virgo  
Dura pati, cursuque pedum prævertere ventos.  
Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret  
Gramina: nec teneras cursu læsisset aristas:  
Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumentis,  
Ferret iter; celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.

*Æneid, VII. 808.*

Last from the Volscians fair Camilla came  
And led her warlike troops, a warrior dame,  
Unbred to spinning, in the loom unskilled,  
She chose the nobler Pallas of the field.  
Mixed with the first the fierce virago fought  
Sustained the toils of arms, the danger sought,  
Outstripped the winds in speed upon the plain,  
Flew o'er the field, nor hurt the bearded grain.  
She swept the seas, and as she skimmed along,  
Her flying feet unbathed on billows hung.

This example is copied by the author of *Telemachus*:

Les Brutiens sont legeres à la course comme les cerfs, et comme les daims;  
On croiroit que l'herbe même la plus tendre n'est point foulée sous leurs pieds,  
à peine laissent-ils dans le sable quelques traces de leurs pas. *Liv. X.*

Again:

Déjà il avoit abattu Eusilas si léger à la course, qu'à peine il imprimoit la  
trace de ses pas dans le sable, et qui devoit dans son pays les plus rapides flots  
de l'Eurotas et de l'Alphée. *Liv. XX.*

Fourth, In narration as well as in description, objects ought to be painted so accurately as to form in the mind of the reader distinct and lively images. Every useless circumstance ought indeed to be suppressed, because every such circumstance loads the narration; but if a circumstance be necessary, however slight, it cannot be described too minutely. The force of language consists in raising complete images;\* which have the effect to transport the reader as by magic into the very place of the important action, and to convert him as it were into a spectator, beholding every thing that passes. The narrative in an epic poem ought to rival a picture in the liveliness and accuracy of its representations: no circumstance must be omitted that tends to make a complete image; because an imperfect image, as well as any other imperfect conception, is cold and unin-

teresting. I shall illustrate this rule by several examples, giving the first place to a beautiful passage from Virgil:

Qualis *populeâ* mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ  
Amissos queritur fœtus, quos durus *arator*  
Observans nido *implumes* detraxit. *Georg. lib. IV. l. 511*

So close in *poplar* shades, her children gone,  
The mother nightingale laments alone,  
Whose nest some prying churl had found, and thence  
By stealth conveyed the *unfeathered* innocence.

The poplar, ploughman, and unfledged young, though not essential in the description, tend to make a complete image, and upon that account are an embellishment.

Again:

Hic viridem *Æneas frondenti ex ilice* metam  
Constituit, signum nautis. *Æneid, V. 129.*

On this, the hero fixed an oak in sight  
The mark to guide the mariners aright.

Horace, addressing to Fortune:

Te pauper ambit sollicita prece  
Ruris colonus: te dominam sequor,  
Quicumque Bythinâ lacessit  
Carpathium pelagus carinâ. *Carm. lib. I. ode 35.*

Thee the poor farmer's anxious prayer  
Solicits, that his fields may bear—  
Thee, mistress of the main, the sailor hails,  
As his Bythinian bark o'er Cretan billows sails.

— Illum ex mœnibus hosticis  
Matrona bellantis tyranni  
Prospiciens, et adulta virgo,  
Suspiret: Eheu, ne rudis agminum  
Sponsus lacessat regius asperum  
Tactu leonem, quem cruenta  
Per medias rapit ira cædes. *Carm. lib. III. ode 2*

Him from the wall the tyrant's consort spies,  
And marriageable virgin sends her broken sighs.

Ah me for fear my royal spouse  
Should this ungoverned lion rouse,  
And with inferior skill provoke his rage,

Which breaks through thickest ranks the midmost war to wage.

Shakspeare says,\* "You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice by fanning in his face with a *peacock's* feather." The peacock's feather, not to mention the beauty of the object, completes the image: an accurate image cannot be formed of that fanciful operation, without conceiving a particular feather; and one is at a loss when this is neglected in the description. Again, "the rogues alighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' th' litter." †

*Old Lady.* You would not be a queen?

*Anne.* No, not for all the riches under heav'n.

*Old Lady.* 'Tis strange: a threepence bow'd would hire me, old as I am, to queen it. *Henry VIII. Act II. Sc. 3.*

In the following passage, the action, with all its material circumstances, is represented so much to the life, that it would scarcely

\* *Henry V. Act IV. Sc. 4.*

† *Merry Wives of Windsor, Act III. Sc. 5.*

appear more distinct to a real spectator; and it is the manner of description that contributes greatly to the sublimity of the passage.

He spake; and to confirm his words, out flew  
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze  
Far round illumined hell: highly they rag'd  
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms  
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,  
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heav'n. *Milton, B. 1.*

A passage I am to cite from Shakspeare, falls not much short of that now mentioned in particularity of description:

O you hard hearts! you cruel men of Rome!  
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,  
Your infants in your arms; and there have sat  
The live-long day with patient expectation  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome;  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
Have you not made an universal shout,  
That Tyber trembled underneath his banks,  
To hear the replication of your sounds,  
Made in his concave shores? *Julius Caesar, Act I. Sc. 1.*

The following passage is scarcely inferior to either of those mentioned:

Far before the rest, the son of Ossian comes; bright in the smiles of youth, fair as the first beams of the sun. His long hair waves on his back: his dark brow is half beneath his helmet. The sword hangs loose on the hero's side; and his spear glitters as he moves. I fled from his terrible eye, King of high Temora. *Fingal.*

The *Henriade* of Voltaire errs greatly against the foregoing rule: every incident is touched in a summary way, without ever descending to circumstances. This manner is good in a general history, the purpose of which is to record important transactions: but in a fable it is cold and uninteresting; because it is impracticable to form distinct images of persons or things represented in a manner so superficial.

It is observed above, that every useless circumstance ought to be suppressed. The crowding of such circumstances, is, on the one hand, no less to be avoided, than the conciseness for which Voltaire is blamed, on the other. In the *Æneid*,\* Barce, the nurse of Sichæus, whom we never hear of before nor after, is introduced for a purpose not more important than to call Anna to her sister Dido: and that it might not be thought unjust in Dido, even in this trivial circumstance, to prefer her husband's nurse before her own, the poet takes care to inform his reader, that Dido's nurse was dead. To this I must oppose a beautiful passage in the same book, where, after Dido's last speech, the poet, without detaining his readers by describing the manner of her death, hastens to the lamentation of her attendants:

Dixerat: atque illam media inter talia ferro  
Collapsam aspiciunt comites, ensemque cruore

\* Lib. iv. l. 632.

Spumantem, sparsasque manus. It clamor ad alta  
Atria, concussam bacchatur fama per urbem;  
Lamentis gemituque et fœmineo ululatu  
Tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus æther.

Lib. IV. l. 663.

She said and struck; deep entered in her side  
The piercing steel, with reeking purple dyed,  
Clogged in the wound the cruel weapon stands,  
The spouting blood came streaming o'er her hands.  
Her sad attendants saw the deadly stroke,  
And with loud cries the sounding palace shook.  
Distracted from the fatal sight they fled,  
And through the town the dismal rumor spread.  
First from the frightened court the yell began,  
Redoubled thence, from house to house it ran;  
The groans of men, with shrieks, laments, and cries  
Of mixing women, mount the vaulted skies.

As an appendix to the foregoing rule, I add the following observation, that to make a sudden and strong impression, some single circumstance happily selected, has more power than the most labored description. Macbeth, mentioning to his lady some voices he heard while he was murdering the King, says,

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cry'd Murder!  
They wak'd each other; and I stood and heard them;  
But they did say their prayers, and address them  
Again to sleep.

*Lady.* There are two lodg'd together.

*Macbeth.* One cry'd, God bless us! and Amen the other;  
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.  
Listening their fear, I could not say Amen,  
When they did say, God bless us.

*Lady.* Consider it not so deeply.

*Macbeth.* But wherefore could not I pronounce Amen?  
I had most need of blessing, and Amen  
Stuck in my throat.

*Lady.* These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

*Macbeth.* Methought I heard a voice cry,  
Sleep no more!

Macbeth doth murder sleep, &c.

Act II. Sc. 2.

Alphonso, in the *Mourning Bride*, shut up in the same prison where his father had been confined:

In a dark corner of my cell I found  
This paper, what it is this light will show.

"If my Alphonso"———Ha!

[Reading.]

"If my Alphonso live, restore him, Heav'n;  
Give more weight, crush my declining years  
With bolts, with chains, imprisonment and want;  
But bless my son, visit not him for me."

It is his hand; this was his pray'r—Yet more:

"Let ev'ry hair, which sorrow by the roots

[Reading.]

Tears from my hoary and devoted head,

Be doubled in thy mercies to my son:

Not for myself, but him, hear me, all-gracious"—

'Tis wanting what should follow———Heav'n should follow,

But 'tis torn off—Why should that word alone

Be torn from his petition? 'Twas to Heav'n,

But Heav'n was deaf, Heav'n heard him not; but thus,

Thus as the name of Heav'n from this is torn,

So did it tear the ears of mercy from

His voice, shutting the gates of pray'r against him.  
 If piety be thus debarr'd access  
 On high, and of good men the very best  
 Is singled out to bleed, and bear the scourge,  
 What is reward ? or what is punishment ?  
 But who shall dare to tax eternal justice ?

*Mourning Bride, Act III. Sc. 1.*

This incident is a happy invention, and a mark of uncommon genius.

Describing Prince Henry :

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,  
 His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,  
 Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury ;  
 And vaulted with such ease into his seat,  
 As if an angel dropt down from the clouds,  
 To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,  
 And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

*First Part Henry IV. Act IV. Sc. 1.*

*King Henry.* Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on Heaven's bliss,  
 Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.  
 He dies, and makes no sign !

*Second Part Henry VI. Act III. Sc. 3.*

The same author, speaking ludicrously of an army debilitated with diseases, says,

Half of them dare not shake the snow from off their cossocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.

I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The flames had resounded in the halls ; and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lonely head : the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows : and the rank grass of the wall waved round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Morna : silence is in the house of her fathers. *Fingal.*

To draw a character is the master-stroke of description. In this Tacitus excels : his portraits are natural and lively, not a feature wanting nor misplaced. Shakspeare, however, exceeds Tacitus in liveliness, some characteristical circumstance being generally invented or laid hold of, which paints more to the life than many words. The following instances will explain my meaning, and at the same time prove my observation to be just :

Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
 Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster ?  
 Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice,  
 By being peevish ? I tell thee what, Antonio,  
 (I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,)  
 There are a sort of men, whose visages  
 Do cream and mantle like a standing pond ;  
 And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit ;  
 As who should say, I am Sir Oracle,  
 And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark !  
 O my Antonio, I do know of those,  
 That therefore only are reputed wise,  
 For saying nothing.

*Merchant of Venice, Act I. Sc. 1.*

Again :

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice :

his reasons are two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them they are not worth the search.

*Ibid.*

In the following passage a character is completed by a single stroke.

*Shallow.* O the mad days that I have spent; and to see how many of mine old acquaintance are dead.

*Silence.* We shall all follow, Cousin.

*Shallow.* Certain, 'tis certain, very sure, very sure; Death (as the Psalmist saith) is certain to all: all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?

*Slender.* Truly, Cousin, I was not there.

*Shallow.* Death is certain. Is old *Double* of your town living yet?

*Silence.* Dead, Sir.

*Shallow.* Dead! see, see; he drew a good bow: and dead. He shot a fine shoot. How a score of ewes now?

*Silence.* Thereafter as they be. A score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

*Shallow.* And is old *Double* dead? *Second Part Henry IV. Act III. Sc. 2.*

Describing a jealous husband:

Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note. There is no hiding you in the house.

*Merry Wives of Windsor, Act IV. Sc. 2.*

Congreve has an inimitable stroke of this kind in his comedy of *Love for Love*:

*Ben Legend.* Well, father, and how do all at home? how does brother Dick, and brother Val?

*Sir Sampson.* Dick: body o' me, Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

*Ben.* Mess, that's true: marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say.

*Act III. Sc. 6.*

Falstaff speaking of ancient Pistol:

He's no swaggerer, hostess: a tame cheater i'faith; you may stroak him as gently as a puppy-greyhound; he will not swagger with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any shew of resistance.

*Second Part Henry IV. Act II. Sc. 4.*

Ossian, among his other excellencies, is eminently successful in drawing characters; and he never fails to delight his reader with the beautiful attitudes of his heroes. Take the following instances:

O Oscar! bend the strong in arm; but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people; but like the gale that moves the grass to those who ask thine aid.—So Tremor lived; such Trathal was; and such has Fingal been. My arm was the support of the injured; and the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

We heard the voice of joy on the coast, and we thought that the mighty Cathmore came. Cathmore the friend of strangers, the brother of red-haired Cairbar. But their souls were not the same; for the light of heaven was in the bosom of Cathmore. His towers rose on the banks of Atha: seven paths led to his halls: seven chiefs stood on these paths, and called the stranger to the feast. But Cathmore dwelt in the wood to avoid the voice of praise.

Dermid and Oscar were one: they reaped the battle together. Their friendship was strong as their steel; and death walked between them to the field. They rush on the foe like two rocks falling from the brow of Arden. Their swords are stained with the blood of the valiant: warriors faint at their name. Who is equal to Oscar but Dermid? who to Dermid but Oscar?



Son of Comhal, replied the chief, the strength of Morni's arm has failed; I attempt to draw the sword of my youth, but it remains in its place: I throw the spear, but it falls short of the mark: and I feel the weight of my shield. We decay like the grass of the mountain, and our strength returns no more. I have a son, O Fingal, his soul has delighted in the actions of Morni's youth; but his sword has not been fitted against the foe, neither has his fame begun. I come with him to battle, to direct his arm. His renown will be a sun to my soul, in the dark hour of my departure. O that the name of Morni were forgot among the people! that the heroes would only say, "Behold the father of Gaul."

Some writers, through heat of imagination, fall into contradiction; some are guilty of downright absurdities; and some even rave like madmen. Against such capital errors one cannot be more effectually warned than by collecting instances; and the first shall be of a contradiction, the most venial of all. Virgil speaking of Neptune,

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum,  
Emissamque hyemem sensit Neptunus, et imis  
Stagna refusa vadis: *graviter commotus*, et alto  
Prospiciens, summâ *placidum* caput extulit undâ.

*Æneid*, l. 198.

Meantime imperial Neptune heard the sound  
Of raging billows breaking on the ground,  
*Displeased*, and fearing for his watery reign,  
He reared his *placid* head above the main.

Again:

When first young Maro, in his boundless mind,  
A work t' outlast *immortal* Rome design'd.

*Essay on Criticism*, l. 130.

The following examples are of absurdities:

Alii pulsus e tormento catenis discerpti sectique, dimidiato corpore pugnabant  
sibi superstites, ac peremptæ partis ultores.\* *Strada*, Dec. II. l. 2.

He fled; but flying, left his life behind.

*Iliad*, XI. 433.

Full through his neck the weighty falchion sped:  
Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

*Odyssey*, XXII. 365.

The last article is of raving like one mad. Cleopatra speaking to the asp,

————— Welcome, thou kind deceiver,  
Thou best of thieves: who, with an easy key,  
Dost open life, and unperceiv'd by us,  
E'en steal us from ourselves; discharging so  
Death's dreadful office, better than himself;  
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,  
That Death stands by, deceiv'd by his own image,  
And thinks himself but sleep. *Dryden*, *All for Love*, Act V.

Reasons that are common and known to every one, ought to be taken for granted: to express them is childish, and interrupts the narration. Quintus Curtius, relating the battle of Issus,

Jam in conspectu, sed extra teli jactum, utraque acies erat; quum priores Persæ inconditum et trucem sustulere clamorem. Redditur et a Macedonibus major, exercitus impar numero, sed jugis montium vastisque saltibus percussus: *quippe*

\* Others, being torn to pieces and divided, by chains-shot driven from cannon fought with half a body, surviving themselves, and avengers of the limbs they had lost.

*semper circumjuncta nemora petraque, quantumcunque accipere vocem, multiplicat sono referunt.\**

Having discussed what observations occurred upon the thoughts or things expressed, I proceed to what more peculiarly concern the language or verbal dress. The language proper for expressing passion being handled in a former chapter, several observations there made are applicable to the present subject; particularly, that as words are intimately connected with the ideas they represent, the emotions raised by the sound and by the sense ought to be concordant. An elevated subject requires an elevated style; what is familiar, ought to be familiarly expressed: a subject that is serious and important, ought to be clothed in plain nervous language: a description, on the other hand, addressed to the imagination, is susceptible of the highest ornaments that sounding words and figurative expression can bestow upon it.

I shall give a few examples of the foregoing rules. A poet of any genius is not apt to dress a high subject in low words; and yet blemishes of that kind are found even in classical works. Horace, observing that men are satisfied with themselves, but seldom with their condition, introduces Jupiter indulging to each his own choice:

Jam faciam quod vultis; eris tu, qui modo miles,  
Mercator: tu, consultus modo, rusticus: hinc voca,  
Vos hinc mutatis discedite partibus: eia,  
Quid statis? nolint: atqui licet esse beatis.  
Quid causæ est, merito quin illis, *Jupiter ambas*  
*Iralas buccas inflet?* neque se fore posthac  
Tam facilem dicat, votis ut præbeat aurem?

*Sat. Lib. I. Sat. I. l. 16*

—————I will to each assign  
The part he chooses—I decree  
The soldier shall a merchant be;  
And he, a counsellor of late,  
Shall have the country squire's estate—  
Do you come here to shift the scene,  
And you go there, what do you mean!  
They hesitate with all their hearts,  
Tho' in their power to change their parts.  
What cause now therefore can they show  
But Jupiter should puff and blow  
In wrath, and for the future swear  
He'll not consent to hear their prayer.

Jupiter in wrath puffing up both cheeks, is a low and even ludicrous expression, far from being suitable to the gravity and importance of the subject: every one must feel the discordance. The following couplet, sinking far below the subject, is no less ludicrous.

Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,  
Yet ne'er looks forward farther than his nose.

*Essay on Man, Ep. IV. 223.*

Le Rhin tremble et frémit à ces tristes nouvelles;  
Le feu sort à travers ses humides prunelles.

\* Now both armies were in sight, but not within the cast of an arrow, when the Persians gave a rude and fierce shout. A louder was returned by the Macedonians, although smaller in number, for it was re-echoed from the ridges of the mountains and the vast lawns; *because circumjacent groves and rocks always return a voice with multiplied sounds.*

C'est donc trop peu, dit-il, que l'Escant en deux mois  
 Ait appris à couler sous de nouvelles loix ;  
 Et de mille remparts mon onde environnée  
 De ces fleuves sans nom suivra la destinée ?  
 Ah ! périssent mes eaux, ou par d'illustres coups  
 Montrons qui doit céder des mortels ou de nous.  
 A ces mots essuyant sa barbe limoneuse,  
 Il prend d'un vieux guerrier la figure poudreuse.  
 Son front cicatrisé rend son air furieux,  
 Et l'ardeur du combat étincelle en ses yeux.

*Boileau, Epitre IV. l. 61.*

A god wiping his dirty beard is proper for burlesque poetry only ;  
 and altogether unsuitable to the strained elevation of this poem.

On the other hand, to raise the expression above the tone of the  
 subject, is a fault than which none is more common. Take the fol-  
 lowing instances :

Orcan le plus fidèle à servir ses desseins,  
 Né sous le ciel brûlant des plus noirs Africains.

*Bajazet, Act III. Sc. 8.*

Les ombres par trois fois ont obscurci les cieux  
 Depuis que le sommeil n'est entré dans vos yeux :  
 Et le jour a trois fois chassé la nuit obscure  
 Depuis que votre corps languit sans nourriture.

*Phædra, Act I. Sc. 3.*

*Assuerus.* Ce mortel, qui montra tant de zèle pour moi, Vit-il encore ?

*Asaph.* ——— Il voit l'astre qui vous éclaire.

*Esther, Act II. Sc. 3.*

Oui, c'est Agamemnon, c'est ton roi qui t'éveille ;  
 Viens, reconnois la voix qui frappe ton oreille.

*Iphigenia.*

No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell ;  
 And the King's rouse the heav'ns shall bruit again,  
 Respeaking earthly thunder.

*Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 2.*

————— In the inner room

I spy a winking lamp, that weakly strikes  
 The ambient air, scarce kindling into light.

*Southern, Fate of Capua, Act III.*

In the funeral orations of the Bishop of Meaux, the following pas-  
 sages are raised far above the tone of the subject :

L'Océan étonné de se voir traversé tant de fois, en des appareils si divers, et  
 pour des causes si différentes, &c. P. 6.

Grand Reine, je satisfais à vos plus tendres désirs, quand je célèbre ce mo-  
 narque ; et son cœur qui n'a jamais vécu que pour lui, s' éveille, tout poudre qu'il  
 est, et devient sensible, même sous ce drap mortuaire, au nom d'un époux si  
 cher. P. 32.

Montesquieu, in a didactic work, *L'Esprit des Loix*, gives too great  
 indulgence to imagination : the tone of his language swells fre-  
 quently above his subject. I give an example :

M. le Comte de Boulainvilliers et M. l'Abbé Dubos ont fait chacun un système,  
 dont l'un semble être une conjuration contre le tiers-état, et l'autre une conjuration  
 contre la noblesse. Lorsque le Soleil donna à Phaëton son char à conduire, il lui  
 dit, Si vous montez trop haut, vous brûlerez la demeure céleste ; si vous descendez  
 trop bas, vous réduirez en cendres la terre : n'allez point trop à droite, vous tom-  
 beriez dans la constellation du serpent ; n'allez point trop à gauche, vous iriez  
 dans cel's de l'autel : tenez-vous entre les deux. L. 30. ch. 10.

The following passage, intended, one would imagine, as a receipt to boil water, is altogether burlesque by the labored elevation of the diction :

A massy caldron of stupendous frame  
They brought, and plac'd it o'er the rising flame:  
Then heap the lighted wood ; the flame divides  
Beneath the vase, and climbs around the sides :  
In its wide womb, they pour the rushing stream:  
The boiling water bubbles to the brim. *Iliad*, XVIII. 405.

In a passage at the beginning of the 4th book of *Telemachus*, one feels a sudden bound upward without preparation, which accords not with the subject :

Calypso, qui avoit été jusqu' à ce moment immobile et transportée de plaisir en écoutant les aventures de Télémaque, l'interrompt pour lui faire prendre quelque repos. Il est tems, lui dit-elle, qui vous alliez goûter la douceur du sommeil après tant de travaux. Vous n'avez rien à craindre ici ; tout vous est favorable. Abandonnez vous donc à la joie. Goutez la paix, et tous les autres dons des dieux dont vous allez être comblé. Demain, quand l'Aurore avec ses doigts de roses entr'ouvrira les portes dorées de l'Orient, et que les Chevaux du Soleil sortans de l'onde amère répandront les flammes du jour, pour chasser devant eux toutes les étoiles du ciel, nous reprendrons, mon cher Télémaque, l'histoire de vos malheurs.

This obviously is copied from a similar passage in the *Æneid*, which ought not to have been copied, because it lies open to the same censure ; but the force of authority is great :

At regina gravi jamdudum saucia cura  
Vulnus alit venis, et cæco carpitur igni.  
Multa viri virtus animo, multusque recursat  
Gentis honos : hærent infixi pectore vultus,  
Verbaque ; nec placidam membris dat cura quietem.  
*Postera Phæbea lustrabat lampade terras,*  
*Humentemque Aurora polo dimoverat umbram ;*  
Cum sic unanimem alloquitur male sana sororem. Lib. IV. l.  
But anxious cares already seized the queen,  
She fed within her veins a flame unseen—  
The hero's valor, acts, and birth inspire  
Her soul with love, and fan the secret fire.  
His words, his looks, imprinted in her heart,  
Improve the passion and increase the smart.  
Now when the purple morn had chased away  
The dewy shadows, and restored the day,  
Her sister first with early cure she sought,  
And thus, in mournful accents, eased her thought.

Take another example where the words rise above the subject :

Ainsi les peuples y accoururent bientôt en foule de toutes parts ; le commerce de cette ville étoit semblable au flux et au reflux de la mer. Les trésors y entroient comme les flots viennent l'un sur l'autre. Tout y étoit apporté et en sortoit librement ; tout ce qui y entroit, étoit utile ; tout ce qui en sortoit, laissoit en sortant d'autres richesses en sa place. La justice sévère présidoit dans le port au milieu de tant de nations. La franchise, la bonne foi, la candeur, sembloient du haut de ces superbes tours appeler les marchands des terres les plus éloignées : chacun de ces marchands, soit qu'il vint des rives orientales où le soleil sort chaque jour du sein des ondes, soit qu'il fût parti de cette grande mer où le soleil lassé de son cours va éteindre ses feux, vevoit paisiblement assurer sa sûreté dans Salente comme dans sa patrie !  
*Télémaque*, l. 12.

The language of Homer is suited to his subject, no less accurately than the actions and sentiments of his heroes are to their characters.

Virgil, in that particular, falls short of perfection: his language is stately throughout; and though he descends at times to the simplest branches of cookery, roasting and boiling for example, yet he never relaxes a moment from the high tone.\* In adjusting his language to his subject, no writer equals Swift. I can recollect but one exception, which at the same time is far from being gross: *The journal of a modern lady* is composed in a style blending sprightliness with familiarity, perfectly suited to the subject: in one passage, however, the poet deviating from that style, takes a tone above his subject. The passage I have in view begins, *l.* 116. *But let me now a while survey, &c.* and ends at *l.* 135.

It is proper to be observed upon this head, that writers of inferior rank are continually upon the stretch to enliven and enforce their subject by exaggeration and superlatives. This unluckily has an effect contrary to what is intended; the reader, disgusted with language that swells above the subject, is led by contrast to think more meanly of the subject than it may possibly deserve. A man of prudence, beside, will be no less careful to husband his strength in writing than in walking: a writer too liberal of superlatives, exhausts his whole stock upon ordinary incidents, and reserves no share to express, with greater energy, matters of importance.†

Many writers of that kind abound so in epithets, as if poetry consisted entirely in high-sounding words. Take the following instance:

When black-brow'd Night her dusky mantle spread,  
And wrapt in solemn gloom the sable sky:  
When soothing Sleep her opiate dews had shed,  
And seal'd in silken slumbers ev'ry eye:  
My wakeful thoughts admit no balmy rest,  
Nor the sweet bliss of soft oblivion share:  
But watchful wo distracts my aching breast,  
My heart the subject of corroding care:  
From haunts of men with wand'ring steps and slow  
I solitary steal, and sooth my pensive wo.

Here every substantive is faithfully attended by some tumid epithet; like young master, who cannot walk abroad without having a lac'd livery-man at his heels. Thus in reading without taste, an emphasis is laid on every word; and in singing without taste, every note is grac'd. Such redundancy of epithets, instead of pleasing, produce satiety and disgust.

The power of language to imitate thought, is not confined to the capital circumstances above mentioned: it reaches even the slighter modifications. Slow action, for example, is imitated by words pronounced slow; labor or toil, by words harsh or rough in their sound. But this subject has been already handled.‡

\* See *Æneid*, lib. I. 188—219.

† Montaigne, reflecting upon the then present modes, observes, that there never was at any other time, so abject and servile prostitution of words in the addresses made by people of fashion to one another; the humblest tenders of life and soul, so professions under that of devotion and adoration; the writer constantly declaring himself a vassal, nay a slave: so that when any more serious occasion of friendship or gratitude requires more genuine professions, words are wanting to express them.

‡ Chap. 18. Sect. 3.

In dialogue-writing, the condition of the speaker is chiefly to be regarded in framing the expression. The sentinel in *Hamlet*, interrogated with relation to the ghost, whether his watch had been quiet, answers with great propriety for a man in his station, "Not a mouse stirring."\*

I proceed to a second remark, no less important than the former. No person of reflection but must be sensible, that an incident makes a stronger impression on an eye-witness, than when heard at second hand. Writers of genius, sensible that the eye is the best avenue to the heart, represent every thing as passing in our sight; and, from readers or hearers, transform us, as it were, into spectators: a skilful writer conceals himself, and presents his personages: in a word, every thing becomes dramatic as much as possible. Plutarch *de gloria Atheniensium*, observes, that Thucydides makes his reader a spectator, and inspires him with the same passions as if he were an eye-witness; and the same observation is applicable to our countryman Swift. From this happy talent arises that energy of style which is peculiar to him: he cannot always avoid narration; but the pencil is his choice, by which he bestows life and coloring upon his objects. Pope is richer in ornament, but possesses not, in the same degree, the talent of drawing from the life. A translation of the sixth satire of Horace, begun by the former and finished by the latter, affords the fairest opportunity for a comparison. Pope obviously imitates the picturesque manner of his friend: yet every one of taste must be sensible, that the imitation, though fine, falls short of the original. In other instances, where Pope writes in his own style, the difference of manner is still more conspicuous.

Abstract or general terms have no good effect in any composition for amusement; because it is only of particular objects that images can be formed.† Shakspeare's style in that respect is excellent: every article in his descriptions is particular, as in nature; and if accidentally a vague expression slip in, the blemish is discernible by the bluntness of its impression. Take the following example: Falstaff, excusing himself for running away at a robbery, says,

By the Lord, I knew ye, as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters; was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest, I am as valiant as Hercules; but beware instinct, the lion will not touch the true prince: *instinct is a great matter*. I was a coward on instinct: I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life; I for a violent lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors, watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What! shall we be merry? shall we have a play *extempore*?

*First Part Henry IV. Act II. Sc. 4.*

The sentence I object to is, *instinct is a great matter*, which makes but a poor figure, compared with the liveliness of the rest of the

\* One can scarcely avoid smiling at the blindness of a certain critic, who, with an air of self-sufficiency, condemns this expression as low and vulgar. A French poet, says he, would express the same thought in a more sublime manner: "Mais tout dort, et l'armée, et les vents, et Neptune." And he adds, "The English poet may please at London, but the French every where else."

† See Chap. 4.

speech. It was one of Homer's advantages, that he wrote before general terms were multiplied: the superior genius of Shakspeare displays itself in avoiding them after they were multiplied. Addison describes the family of Sir Roger de Coverley in the following words:

You would take his valet de chambre for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy counsellor.

*Spectator*, No. 106.

The description of the groom is less lively than of the others; plainly because the expression, being vague and general, tends not to form any image. "Dives opum variarum,"\* is an expression still more vague; and so are the following:

————— *Mæcenæ mearum*  
Grande decus, columenque rerum.†

*Horat. Carm. Lib. II. ode 17.*

————— et fide Tela  
*Dices laborantes in uno*  
Penelopen, vitreamque Circin.‡

*Ibid. Lib. I. ode 17.*

————— *Ridiculum acri*  
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque *secat res.*

*Horat. Satir. Lib. I sat. 10.*

By satire in a pleasant vein,  
A weighty point we oftener gain  
Than talking in severer strain!

In the fine arts it is a rule, to put the capital objects in the strongest point of view; and even to present them oftener than once, where it can be done. In history-painting, the principal figure is placed in the front, and in the best light: an equestrian statue is placed in a centre of streets, that it may be seen from many places at once. In no composition is there greater opportunity for this rule than in writing:

————— *Sequitur pulcherrimus Astur,*  
*Astur equo fidens et versicoloribus armis.§*

*Æneid, X. 130.*

————— Full many a lady  
I've ey'd with best regard, and many a time  
Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage  
Brought my too diligent ear; for several virtues  
Have I lik'd several women, never any  
With so full soul, but some defect in her  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she ow'd,  
And put it to the foil. But you, O you,  
So perfect, and so peerless, are created  
Of every creature's best.

*The Tempest, Act III. Sc. 1*

*Orlando.* ————— Whate'er you are  
That in this desert inaccessible,  
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,  
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;  
If ever you have look'd on better days;  
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church;  
If ever sat at any good man's feast;

\* Georg. 2. 468.

† Mæcenæ the glory and the pillar of my affairs.

‡ And with Teian truth, you shall sing of Penelope, and the fair Circe, con-  
tending for (Ulysses)

§ Beautiful Astur follows—Astur trusting to his horse, and many-colored arms.



If ever from your eye-lids wip'd a tear,  
 And know what 'tis to pity and be pity'd;  
 Let gentleness my strong enforcement be,  
 In the which hope I blush and hide my sword.

*Duke sen.* True is it that we have seen better days;  
 And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church;  
 And sat at good men's feasts; and wip'd our eyes  
 Of drops that sacred pity had engendered:  
 And therefore sit you down in gentleness,  
 And take upon command what help we have,  
 That to your wanting may be ministered.

*As You Like It.*

With thee conversing I forget all time;  
 All seasons and their change, all please alike.  
 Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,  
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun  
 When first on this delightful land he spreads  
 His orient beams, on herbs, tree, fruit, and flow'r,  
 Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth  
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming on  
 Of grateful evening mild, the silent night  
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,  
 And these the gems of heav'n, her starry train.  
 But neither breath of morn, when she ascends  
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun  
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow'r,  
 Glistening with dew, nor fragrance after showers,  
 Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,  
 With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon  
 Or glittering star light, without thee is sweet.

*Paradise Lost, B. IV. l. 634.*

What mean ye, that ye use this proverb, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion to use this proverb in Israel. If a man keep my judgments to deal truly, he is just, he shall surely live. But if he be a robber, a shedder of blood; if he have eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife; if he have oppressed the poor and needy, have spoiled by violence, have not restored the pledge, have lift up his eyes to idols, have given forth upon usury, and have taken increase: shall he live? he shall not live: he shall surely die; and his blood shall be upon him. Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins, and considereth, and doeth not such like; that hath not eaten upon the mountains, hath not lift up his eyes to idols, nor defiled his neighbour's wife, hath not oppressed any, nor withheld the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and covered the naked with a garment; that hath not received usury nor increase, that hath executed my judgments, and walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Have I any pleasure that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live?

*Ezekiel, XVIII.*

The repetitions in Homer, which are frequent, have been the occasion of much criticism. Suppose we were at a loss about the reason, might not taste be sufficient to justify them? At the same time, we are at no loss about the reason: they evidently make the narration dramatic, and have an air of truth, by making things appear as passing in our sight. But such repetitions are unpardonable in a didactic poem. In one of Hesiod's poems of that kind, a long passage occurs twice in the same chapter.

A concise comprehensive style is a great ornament in narration;

and a superfluity of unnecessary words, no less than of circumstances, a great nuisance. A judicious selection of the striking circumstances clothed in a nervous style, is delightful. In this style, Tacitus excels all writers, ancient and modern. Instances are numberless: take the following specimen.

Crebra hinc prælia, et sæpius in modum latrocinii: per saltus, per paludes; ut cuique fors aut virtus: temere, proviso, ob iram, ob prædam, jussa, et aliquando ignaris ducibus. *Annal. lib. XII. § 39.*

Hence arose, frequent battles, and depredations without number, in the forests, in the marshes, according to one's courage or luck—rashly—cautiously—on account of anger—for plunder, and sometimes by the orders of ignorant leaders.

After Tacitus, Ossian in that respect justly merits the place of distinction. One cannot go wrong for examples in any part of the book; and at the first opening the following instance meets the eye:

Nathos clothed his limbs in shining steel. The stride of the chief is lovely: the joy of his eye terrible. The wind rustles in his hair. Darthuia is silent at his side: her look is fixed on the chief. Striving to hide the rising sigh, two tears swell in her eyes.

I add one other instance, which, beside the property under consideration, raises delicately our most tender sympathy.

Son of Fingal! dost thou not behold the darkness of Crothar's hall of shells? My soul was not dark at the feast, when my people lived. I rejoiced in the presence of strangers, when my son shone in the hall. But, Ossian, he is a beam that is departed, and left no streak of light behind. He is fallen, son of Fingal, in the battles of his father.—Rothmar, the chief of grassy Tromlo, heard that my eyes had failed; he heard that my arms were fixed in the hall, and the pride of his soul arose. He came towards Croma: my people fell before him. I took my arms in the hall, but what could sightless Crothar do? My steps were unequal; my grief was great. I wished for the days that were past: days! wherein I fought, and won in the field of blood. My son returned from the chase; the fair-haired Fovar-gormo. He had not lifted his sword in battle, for his arm was young. But the soul of the youth was great; the fire of valor burnt in his eye. He saw the disordered steps of his father, and his sigh arose. King of Croma, he said, is it because thou hast no son? is it for the weakness of Fovar-gormo's arm that thy sighs arise: I begin, my father, to feel the strength of my arm; I have drawn the sword of my youth, and I have bent the bow. Let me meet this Rothmar, with the youths of Croma: let me meet him, O my father, for I feel my burning soul.

And thou shalt meet him, I said, son of the sightless Crothar! But let others advance before thee, that I may hear the tread of thy feet at thy return; for my eyes behold thee not, fair-haired Fovar-gormo!—He went; he met the foe; he fell. The foe advances towards Croma. He who slew my son is near, with all his pointed spears.

If a concise or nervous style be a beauty, tautology must be a blemish; and yet writers, fettered by verse, are not sufficiently careful to avoid this slovenly practice: they may be pitied, but they cannot be justified. Take for a specimen the following instances, from the best poet, for versification at least, that England has to boast of.

High on his helm celestial lightnings play,  
His beamy shield emits a living ray,  
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,  
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies. *Iliad, V. 5.*

Strength and omnipotence invest thy throne. *Iliad, VIII. 576.*

So silent fountains, from a rock's tall head,  
 In sable streams soft trickling waters shed. *Iliad*, IX. 19.  
 His clanging armor rung. *Iliad*, XII. 94.  
 Fear on their cheek, and horror in their eye. *Iliad*, XV. 4.  
 The blaze of armor flash'd against the day. *Iliad*, XVII. 736.  
 As when the piercing blasts of Boreas blow. *Iliad*, XIX. 380.  
 And like the moon, the broad refulgent shield  
 Blaz'd with long rays, and gleam'd athwart the field.  
*Iliad*, XIX. 402.  
 No—could our swiftness o'er the winds prevail,  
 Or beat the pinions of the western gale,  
 All were in vain—— *Iliad*, XIX. 460.  
 The humid sweat from ev'ry pore descends. *Iliad*, XXIII. 829.

Redundant epithets, such as *humid* in the last citation, are by Quintilian disallowed to orators, but indulged to poets,\* because his favorite poets, in a few instances, are reduced to such epithets for the sake of versification; for instance, *Prata canis albicant pruina* of Horace, and *liquidus fontes* of Virgil.

As an apology for such careless expressions, it may well suffice, that Pope, in submitting to be a translator, acts below his genius. In a translation, it is hard to require the same spirit or accuracy, that is cheerfully bestowed on an original work. And to support the reputation of that author, I shall give some instances from Virgil and Horace, more faulty by redundancy than any of those above mentioned:

Sæpe etiam immensum cœlo venit agmen aquarum,  
 Et fœdam glomerant tempestatem imbris atris  
 Collectæ ex alto nubes: ruit arduus ether,  
 Et pluviâ ingenti sata læta, boumque labores  
 Diluit. *Georg.* lib. I. 322.

And oft whole sheets descend of sluicy rain  
 Sucked by the spongy clouds from off the main.  
 The lofty skies at once come pouring down,  
 The promised crop and golden labors drown.

Postquam altum tenuere rates, nec jam amplius ullas  
 Apparent terræ; cœlum undique et undique pontus:  
 Tum mihi cœruleus supra caput astitit imber,  
 Noctem hyememque ferens: et inhorruit unda tenebris.  
*Æneid*, lib. III. 192.

Now from the sight of land our galleys move,  
 With only seas around, and skies above,  
 When o'er our heads descends a burst of rain,  
 And night with sable clouds involves the main.  
 The ruffling winds the foamy billows rave——

————— Hinc tibi copia  
 Manabit ad plenum benigno  
 Ruris honorum opulenta cornu. *Horat.* *Carm.* lib. I. ode 17.  
 Here you shall fully taste—a welcome guest—  
 The horn of rural heaped for thee, and prest.

Videre fessos vomerem inversum boves  
 Collo trabentes languido. *Horat.* *epod.* II. 62.

\* L. VIII. cap. 6. sect. 2.

The inverted plough to see,  
Which oxen o'er the lea,  
With languid neck at leisure pull.

Here I can luckily apply Horace's rule against himself.

Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententia, neu se  
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures. *Satir. lib. I. sat. X. 9.*

But that the period may run free,  
Nor with vain words the ear be tired,  
There is a brevity required.

I close this chapter with a curious inquiry. An object, however ugly to the sight, is far from being so when represented by colors or by words. What is the cause of this difference? With respect to painting, the cause is obvious: a good picture, whatever the subject be, is agreeable by the pleasure we take in imitation; and this pleasure overbalancing the disagreeableness of the subject, makes the picture upon the whole agreeable. With respect to the description of an ugly object, the cause follows. To connect individuals in the social state, no particular contributes more than language, by the power it possesses of an expeditious communication of thought, and a lively representation of transactions. But nature has not been satisfied to recommend language by its utility merely: independent of utility, it is made susceptible of many beauties, which are directly felt, without any intervening reflection.\* And this unfolds the mystery; for the pleasure of language is so great, as in a lively description to overbalance the disagreeableness of the image raised by it.† This, however, is no encouragement to choose a disagreeable subject; for the pleasure is incomparably greater where the subject and the description are both of them agreeable.

The following description is upon the whole agreeable though the subject described is in itself dismal:

Nine times the space that measures day and night  
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew  
Lay vanquish'd rolling in the fiery gulf,  
Confounded though immortal! but his doom  
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought  
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain  
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes  
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,  
Mix'd with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:  
At once as far as angels ken he views  
The dismal situation waste and wild:  
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes  
That comes to all; but torture without end  
Still urges, and fiery deluge, fed  
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed!  
Such place eternal justice had prepar'd  
For those rebellious. *Paradise Lost, book I. l. 60.*

\* See Chap. 18.

† See Chap. 2. part 4.

An unmanly depression of spirits in time of danger is not an agreeable sight; and yet a fine description or representation of it will be relished:

*K. Richard.* What must the king do now? must he submit?  
The king shall do it: must he be depos'd?  
The king shall be contented: must he lose  
The name of King? i' God's name, let it go:  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;  
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;  
My gay apparel, for an almsman's gown;  
My figur'd goblets, for a dish of wood;  
My sceptre, for a palmer's walking-staff;  
My subjects, for a pair of carved saints;  
And my large kingdom for a little grave;  
A little, little grave;—an obscure grave.  
Or, I'll be bury'd in the king's highway;  
Some way of common tread, where subjects' feet  
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;  
For on my heart they tread now, whilst I live;  
And bury'd once, why not upon my head?

*Richard II. Act III. Sc. 3.*

Objects that strike terror in a spectator, have in poetry and painting a fine effect. The picture by raising a slight emotion of terror, agitates the mind; and in that condition every beauty makes a deep impression. May not contrast heighten the pleasure, by opposing our present security to the danger of encountering the object represented?

————— The other shape,  
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;  
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd.  
For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,  
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,  
And shook a dreadful dart. *Paradise Lost, book II. l. 666.*

————— Now storming fury rose,  
And clamor such as heard in heaven till now  
Was never: arms on armor clashing bray'd  
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels  
Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
Of conflict: overhead the dismal hiss  
Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,  
And flying vaulted either host with fire.  
So under fiery cope together rush'd  
Both battles main, with ruinous assault  
And inextinguishable rage: all heaven  
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth  
Had to her centre shook. *Paradise Lost, book VI. l. 207*

*Ghost.* ————— But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. *Hamlet, Act I. Sc. 5*

*Gratiano.* Poor Desdemona! I'm glad thy father's dead:  
Thy match was mortal to him; and pure grief

Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,  
 This sight would make him do a desperate turn:  
 Yea, curse his better angel from his side,  
 And fall to reprobation. *Othello*, Act V. Sc. 2.

Objects of horror must be excepted from the foregoing theory; for no description, however lively, is sufficient to overbalance the disgust raised even by the idea of such objects. Every thing horrible ought therefore to be avoided in a description. Nor is this a severe law: the poet will avoid such scenes for his own sake, as well as for that of his reader; and to vary his descriptions, nature affords plenty of objects that disgust us, in some degree, without raising horror. I am obliged, therefore, to condemn the picture of Sin, in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, though a masterly performance: the original would be a horrid spectacle; and the horror is not much softened in the copy:

————— Pensive here I sat  
 Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,  
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,  
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.  
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,  
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,  
 Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain  
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew  
 Transform'd; but he my inbred enemy  
 Forth issu'd, brandishing his fatal dart,  
 Made to destroy: I fled, and cry'd out Death;  
 Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd  
 From all her caves, and back resounded Death.  
 I fled; but he pursu'd, (though more, it seems,  
 Inflam'd with lust than rage,) and swifter far,  
 Me overtook, his mother all dismay'd,  
 And in embraces forcible and foul  
 Ingend'ring with me, of that rape begot  
 These yelling monsters that with ceaseless cry  
 Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceiv'd  
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite  
 To me; for when they list, into the womb  
 That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw  
 My bowels, their repast; then bursting forth,  
 Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,  
 That rest or intermission none I find.  
 Before mine eyes in opposition sits  
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,  
 And me his parent would full soon devour  
 For want of other prey, but that he knows,  
 His end with mine involv'd; and knows that I  
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,  
 Whenever that shall be. *Book II. l. 777.*

Iago's character in the tragedy of *Othello*, is insufferably monstrous and satanical: not even Shakspeare's masterly hand can make the picture agreeable.

Though the objects introduced in the following scenes are not altogether so horrible as Sin is in Milton's description; yet with every person of delicacy, disgust will be the prevailing emotion:

————— Strophades Graio stant nomine dictæ  
 Insulæ Ionio in magno: quas dira Celæno,  
 Harpyiæque colunt alie: Phinicia postquam

Clausa domus, mensasque metu liquere priores.  
 Tristius haud illis monstrum, nec sævior ulla  
 Pestis et ira Deum Stygiis sese extulit undia.  
 Virginei volucrum vultus, fœdissima ventris  
 Proluvies, uncæque manus, et pallida semper  
 Ora fame.  
 Huc ubi delati portus intravimus: ecce  
 Læta boum passim campis armenta videmus,  
 Caprigenumque pecus, nullo custode, per herbas.  
 Irruimus ferro, et Divos ipsumque vocamus  
 In prædam partemque Jovem: tunc littore curvo  
 Extruimusque toros, dapibusque epulamur opimia.  
 At subitæ horrifico lapsu de montibus adsunt  
 Harpyiæ, et magnis quatiunt clangoribus alas:  
 Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fœdant  
 Immundo: tum vox tetrum dira inter odorem.

*Æneid, lib. III. 210.*

At length I land upon the Strophades  
 Safe from the danger of the stormy seas,  
 Those isles are compassed by th' Ionian main,  
 The dire abode where the foul harpies reign,  
 Forced by the winged warriors to repair  
 To their old homes, and leave their costly fare.  
 Monsters more fierce offended heaven ne'er sent  
 From hell's abyss for human punishment—  
 With virgin-faces, but with wombs obscene,  
 Foul paunches, and with ordure still unclean,  
 With claws for hands, and looks for ever lean.  
 We landed at the port, and soon beheld  
 Fat herds of oxen graze the flowery field—  
 And wanton goats without a keeper strayed—  
 With weapons we the welcome prey invade,  
 Then call the gods for partners of our feast,  
 And Jove himself, the chief invited guest.  
 We spread the tables on the greensward ground,  
 We feed with hunger and the bowls go round;  
 When from the mountain tops with hideous cry  
 And clattering wings, the hungry harpies fly—  
 They snatch the meat, defiling all they find,  
 And parting, leave a loathsome stench behind.

Sum patria ex Ithaca, comes infelicis Ulyssæi,  
 Nomen Achemenides: Trojam, genitore Adamasto  
 Paupere (mansissetque utinam fortuna!) profectus.  
 Hic me, dum trepidi crudelia limina linqunt,  
 Immemores socii vasto Cyclopi in antro  
 Deseruere. Domus sanie dapibusque cruentis,  
 Intus opaca, ingens: ipse arduus, altaque pulsat  
 Sidera: (Dii, talem terris avertite pestem)  
 Nec visu facilis, nec dictu affabilis ulli.  
 Visceribus miserorum, et sanguine vescitur atro,  
 Vidi egomet, duo de numero cum corpora nostro,  
 Prensa manu magna, medio resupinus in antro,  
 Frangeret ad saxum, sanieque aspersa natarent  
 Limina: vidi, atro cum membra fluentia tabo  
 Manderet, et tepidi tremarent sub dentibus artus.  
 Haud impune quidem: nec talia passus Ulysses,  
 Oblitusve sui est Ithacus discrimine tanto.  
 Nam simul expletus dapibus, vinoque sepultus  
 Cervicem inflexam posuit, jacuitque per antrum  
 Immensus, sanie eructans, ac frustra cruento  
 Per somnum commixta mero; nos, magna precati  
 Numina, sortitique vicæ, unâ undique circum



Fundimur, et telo lumen terebramus acuto  
Ingens, quod torva solum sub fronte latebat.

*Æneid*, lib. III. 612.

From Ithaca, my native soil, I came  
To Troy, and Achæmenides my name,  
Me, my poor father with Ulysses sent,  
(Oh, had I stayed with poverty content!)  
But fearful for themselves, my countrymen  
Left me forsaken in the Cyclops' den.  
The cave, though large, was dark, the dismal floor  
Was paved with mangled limbs and putrid gore.  
Our monstrous host, of more than human size,  
Erects his head, and stares within the skies.  
Bellowing his voice and horrid is his hue,  
Ye Gods, remove this plague from mortal view!  
The joints of slaughtered wretches are his food,  
And for his wine he quaffs the streaming blood.  
These eyes beheld when with his spacious hand  
He seized two captives of the Grecian band;  
Stretch'd on his back he dashed against the stones  
Their broken bodies and their crackling bones,  
With spouting blood the purple pavement swims,  
While the dire glutton grinds the trembling limbs.  
Not unrevenged Ulysses bore his fate,  
Nor thoughtless of his own unhappy state—  
For, gorged with flesh and drunk with human wine,  
While fast asleep the giant lay supine,  
Snoring aloud and belching from his maw  
His indigested foam and morsels raw—  
We pray, we cast the lots, and then surround  
The monstrous body stretched along the ground,  
Each as he could approach him lends a hand  
To bore his eyeball with a flaming brand.  
Beneath his frowning forehead lay his eye,  
For only one did the vast frame supply—  
But that a globe so large, his front it filled,  
Like the sun's disk, or like a Grecian shield.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## EPIC AND DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

The same end had in view, and the same means employed, in both epic and dramatic poetry—The advantages of dramatic poetry—Aristotle's division of tragedy—The Pathetic and the Moral a better division—Farther illustrated—Facts or circumstances may be invented, but no unaccountable event to be admitted—Effect of pathetic poems—They excite to what is right, and deter from what is wrong—They improve our sympathy—They fortify the mind against misfortunes—The instructions afforded by moral poems, from the moral truth they convey—Tender passions, the province of tragedy; grand and heroic actions, of epic poetry—Venial faults, the best subjects for tragedy—Aristotle's four propositions—When a perfect character is fitted to the pathetic—In epic poetry the subject must be of distant date—In tragedy and comedy, not necessary—In dramatic poetry, a pause in the action necessary at the close of every act—The sentiment and tone of language to be subservient to the action—Machinery to be excluded from epic poetry—The embellishment of allegory admitted in an historical poem—Allegorical and real being not to be introduced co-operating—The character of an episode—To be connected with the principal subject—To be lively and interesting—To be short, and introduced where the subject relents—Drama has a double plot—The nature of the under-plot—Violent actions not to be represented on the stage—Speeches in dialogue, to be connected with each other—Rhyme excluded from dialogue—Ordinary facts to be expressed in plain language.

TRAGEDY differs not from the epic in substance: in both the same ends are pursued, namely, instruction and amusement; and in both the same means is employed, namely, imitation of human actions. They differ only in the manner of imitating: epic poetry employs narration; tragedy represents its facts as passing in our sight: in the former, the poet introduces himself as an historian; in the latter, he presents his actors, and never himself.\*

This difference regarding form only, may be thought slight: but the effects it occasions, are by no means so; for what we see makes a deeper impression than what we learn from others. A narrative poem is a story told by another: facts and incidents passing upon the stage, come under our own observation; and are beside much

\* The dialogue in a dramatic composition distinguishes it so clearly from other compositions, that no writer has thought it necessary to search for any other distinguishing mark. But much useless labor has been bestowed, to distinguish an epic poem by some peculiar mark. Bossu defines it to be, "A composition in verse, intended to form the manners by instructions disguised under the allegories of an important action;" which excludes every epic poem founded upon real facts, and perhaps includes several of Æsop's fables. Voltaire reckons verse so essential, as for that single reason to exclude the adventures of Telemachus. See his *Essay upon Epic Poetry*. Others, affected with substance more than with form, hesitate not to pronounce that poem to be epic.—It is not a little diverting to see so many profound critics hunting for what is not: they take for granted, without the least foundation, that there must be some precise criterion to distinguish epic poetry from every other species of writing. Literary compositions run into each other, precisely like colors: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but are susceptible of so much variety, and of so many different forms, that we never can say where one species ends and another begins. As to the general taste, there is little reason to doubt, that a work where heroic actions are related in an elevated style, will, without farther requisite, be deemed an epic poem.

enlivened by action and gesture, expressive of many sentiments beyond the reach of words.

A dramatic composition has another property, independent altogether of action; which is, that it makes a deeper impression than narration: in the former, persons express their own sentiments; in the latter, sentiments are related at second hand. For that reason, Aristotle, the father of critics, lays it down as a rule, that in an epic poem the author ought to take every opportunity of introducing his actors, and of confining the narrative part within the narrowest bounds.\* Homer understood perfectly the advantage of this method; and his two poems abound in dialogue. Lucan runs to the opposite extreme, even so far as to stuff his *Pharsalia* with cold and languid reflections: the merit of which he assumes to himself, and deigns not to share with his actors. Nothing can be more injudiciously timed, than a chain of such reflections, which suspend the battle of *Pharsalia* after the leaders had made their speeches, and the two armies are ready to engage.†

Aristotle, regarding the fable only, divides tragedy into simple and complex: but it is of greater moment, with respect to dramatic as well as epic poetry, to found a distinction upon the different ends attained by such compositions. A poem, whether dramatic or epic, that has nothing in view but to move the passions and to exhibit pictures of virtue and vice, may be distinguished by the name of *pathetic*: but where a story is purposely contrived to illustrate some moral truth, by showing that disorderly passions naturally lead to external misfortunes; such composition may be denominated *moral*.‡ Besides making a deeper impression than can be done by cool reasoning, a moral poem does not fall short of reasoning in affording conviction: the natural connection of vice with misery, and of virtue with happiness, may be illustrated by stating a fact as well as by urging an argument. Let us assume, for example, the following moral truths; that discord among the chiefs renders ineffectual all common measures; and that the consequences of a slightly-founded quarrel, fostered by pride and arrogance, are no less fatal than those of the grossest injury: these truths may be inculcated, by the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles at the siege of Troy. If facts or circumstances be wanting, such as tend to rouse the turbulent passions, they must be invented; but no accidental nor unaccountable event ought to be admitted; for the necessary or probable connection between vice and misery is not learned from any events but what are naturally occasioned by the characters and passions of the persons represented, acting in such and such circumstances. A real event of which we see not the cause, may afford a lesson, upon the

\* Poet. chap. 25. sect. 6.

† Lib. 7. from line 385 to line 460.

‡ The same distinction is applicable to that sort of fable which is said to be the invention of *Æsop*. A moral, it is true, is by all critics considered as essential to such a fable. But nothing is more common than to be led blindly by authority; for of the numerous collections I have seen, the fables that clearly inculcate a moral, make a very small part. In many fables, indeed, proper pictures of virtue and vice are exhibited: but the bulk of these collections convey no instruction, nor afford any amusement beyond what a child receives in reading an ordinary story.

presumption that what has happened may again happen: but this cannot be inferred from a story that is known to be a fiction.

Many are the good effects of such compositions. A pathetic composition, whether epic or dramatic, tends to a habit of virtue, by exciting us to do what is right, and restraining us from what is wrong.\* Its frequent pictures of human woes, produce, besides, two effects extremely salutary: they improve our sympathy, and fortify us to bear our own misfortunes. A moral composition obviously produces the same good effects, because by being moral it ceases not to be pathetic: it enjoys beside an excellence peculiar to itself; for it not only improves the heart as above mentioned, but instructs the head by the moral it contains. I cannot imagine any entertainment more suited to a rational being, than a work thus happily illustrating some moral truth: where a number of persons of different characters are engaged in an important action, some retarding, others promoting, the great catastrophe: and where there is dignity of style as well as of matter. A work of that kind has our sympathy at command; and can put in motion the whole train of the social affections: our curiosity in some scenes is excited, in others gratified and our delight is consummated at the close, upon finding from the characters and situations exhibited at the commencement, that every incident down to the final catastrophe is natural, and that the whole in conjunction make a regular chain of causes and effects.

Considering that an epic and a dramatic poem are the same in substance, and have the same aim or end, one will readily imagine, that subjects proper for the one must be equally proper for the other. But considering their difference as to form, there will be found reason to correct that conjecture at least in some degree. Many subjects may indeed be treated with equal advantage in either form; but the subjects are still more numerous for which they are not equally qualified; and there are subjects proper for the one, and not for the other. To give some slight notion of the difference, as there is no room here for enlarging upon every article, I observe, that dialogue is better qualified for expressing sentiments, and narrative for displaying facts. Heroism, magnanimity, undaunted courage, and other elevated virtues, figure best in action: tender passions, and the whole tribe of sympathetic affections, figure best in sentiment. It clearly follows, that tender passions are more peculiarly the province of tragedy, grand and heroic actions of epic poetry.†

I have no occasion to say more upon the epic, considered as peculiarly adapted to certain subjects. But as dramatic subjects are more complex, I must take a narrower view of them; which I do the more willingly, in order to clear a point involved in great obscurity by critics.

In the chapter of Emotions and Passions‡ it is occasionally shown,

\* See Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 4.

† In Racine tender sentiments prevail; in Corneille, grand and heroic manners. Hence clearly the preference of the former before the latter, as dramatic poets. Corneille would have figured better in an heroic poem.

‡ Part 4.

that the subject best fitted for tragedy is where a man has himself been the cause of his misfortune; not so as to be deeply guilty, nor altogether innocent: the misfortune must be occasioned by a fault incident to human nature, and, therefore, in some degree venial. Such misfortunes call forth the social affections, and warmly interest the spectator. An accidental misfortune, if not extremely singular, does not greatly move our pity: the person who suffers, being innocent, is freed from the greatest of all torments, that anguish of mind which is occasioned by remorse. An atrocious criminal, on the other hand, who brings misfortunes upon himself, excites little pity, for a different reason: his remorse, it is true, aggravates his distress, and swells the first emotions of pity; but these are immediately blunted by our hatred of him as a criminal. Misfortunes that are not innocent, nor highly criminal, partake the advantages of each extreme: they are attended with remorse to embitter the distress, which raises our pity to a height; and the slight indignation we have at a venial fault, detracts not sensibly from our pity. The happiest of all subjects accordingly for raising pity, is where a man of integrity falls into a great misfortune by doing an action that is innocent, but which, by some singular means is conceived by him to be criminal: his remorse aggravates his distress; and our compassion, unrestrained by indignation, knows no bounds. Pity comes thus to be the ruling passion of a pathetic tragedy; and by proper representation, may be raised to a height scarcely exceeded by any thing felt in real life. A moral tragedy takes in a larger field; as it not only exercises our pity, but raises another passion, which, though selfish, deserves to be cherished equally with the social affection. The passion I have in view is fear or terror; for when a misfortune is the natural consequence of some wrong bias in the temper, every spectator who is conscious of such a bias in himself, takes the alarm, and dreads his falling into the same misfortune: and by the emotion of fear or terror, frequently reiterated in a variety of moral tragedies, the spectators are put upon their guard against the disorders of passion.

The commentators upon Aristotle, and other critics, have been much puzzled about the account given of tragedy by that author: "That, by means of pity and terror, it refines or purifies in us all sorts of passion." But no one who has a clear conception of the end and effects of a good tragedy, can have any difficulty about Aristotle's meaning: our pity is engaged for the persons represented; and our terror is upon our own account. Pity indeed is here made to stand for all the sympathetic emotions, because of these it is the capital. There can be no doubt that our sympathetic emotions are refined or improved by daily exercise; and in what manner our other passions are refined by terror, I have just now said. One thing is certain, that no other meaning can justly be given to the foregoing doctrine than that now mentioned; and that it was really Aristotle's meaning, appears from his 13th chapter, where he delivers several propositions conformable to the doctrine as here explained. These, at the same time, I take the liberty to mention; because, as

far as authority can go, they confirm the foregoing reasoning about subjects proper for tragedy. The first proposition is, that it being the province of tragedy to excite pity and terror, an innocent person falling into adversity ought never to be the subject. This proposition is a necessary consequence of his doctrine as explained: a subject of that nature may indeed excite pity and terror; but in the former in an inferior degree, and the latter no degree for moral instruction. The second proposition is, that the history of a wicked person in a change from misery to happiness, ought not to be represented. It excites neither terror nor compassion, nor is agreeable in any respect. The third is, that the misfortunes of a wicked person ought not to be represented. Such representation may be agreeable in some measure upon a principle of justice: but it will not move our pity; nor any degree of terror, except in those of the same vicious disposition with the person represented. The last proposition is, that the only character fit for representation lies in the middle, neither eminently good nor eminently bad; where the misfortune is not the effect of deliberate vice, but of some involuntary fault, as our author expresses it.\* The only objection I find to Aristotle's account of tragedy, is, that he confines it within too narrow bounds, by refusing admittance to the pathetic kind: for if terror be essential to tragedy, no representation deserves that name but the moral kind, where the misfortunes exhibited are caused by a wrong balance of mind, or some disorder in the internal constitution: such misfortunes always suggest moral instruction; and by such misfortunes only, can terror be excited for our improvement.

Thus Aristotle's four propositions above mentioned relate solely to tragedies of the moral kind. Those of the pathetic kind, are not confined within so narrow limits: subjects fitted for the theatre, are not in such plenty as to make us reject innocent misfortunes which rouse our sympathy, though they inculcate no moral. With respect, indeed, to subjects of that kind, it may be doubted, whether the conclusion ought not always to be fortunate. Where a person of integrity is represented as suffering to the end under misfortunes purely accidental, we depart discontented, and with some obscure sense of injustice: for seldom is man so submissive to Providence, as not to revolt against the tyranny and vexations of blind chance; he will be tempted to say, this ought not to be. Chance, giving an impression of anarchy and misrule, produces always a damp upon the mind. I give for an example the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare, where the fatal catastrophe is occasioned by Friar Laurence's coming to the monument a minute too late: we are vexed at the unlucky chance, and go away dissatisfied. Such impressions, which ought not to be cherished, are a sufficient reason for excluding stories of that kind from the theatre. The misfortunes of a virtuous person, arising from necessary causes or from a chain of unavoidable circumstances, are considered in a different light. A regular chain of causes and effects

\* If any one can be amused with a grave discourse which promiseth much and performs nothing, I refer to Brumoy in his *Theatre Grec*, Preliminary discourse on the origin of Tragedy.

directed by the general laws of nature, never fails to suggest the hand of Providence; to which we submit without resentment, being conscious that submission is our duty.\* For that reason, we are not disgusted with the distresses of Voltaire's *Mariamne*, though redoubled on her till her death, without the least fault or failing on her part: her misfortunes are owing to a cause extremely natural, and not unfrequent, the jealousy of a barbarous husband. The fate of Desdemona, in the *Moor of Venice*, affects us in the same manner. We are not so easily reconciled to the fate of Cordelia in *King Lear*: the causes of her misfortune are by no means so evident, as to exclude the gloomy notion of chance. In short, a perfect character suffering under misfortunes, is qualified for being the subject of a pathetic tragedy, provided chance be excluded. Nor is a perfect character altogether inconsistent with a moral tragedy: it may successfully be introduced in an under part, if the chief place be occupied by an imperfect character, from which a moral can be drawn. This is the case of Desdemona and Mariamne just mentioned; and it is the case of Monimia and Belvidera, in Otway's two tragedies, the *Orphan*, and *Venice Preserved*.

I had an early opportunity to unfold a curious doctrine, that fable operates on our passions, by representing its events as passing in our sight, and by deluding us into a conviction of reality.† Hence, in epic and dramatic compositions, every circumstance ought to be employed that may promote the delusion; such as the borrowing from history of some noted event, with the addition of circumstances that may answer the author's purpose: the principal facts are known to be true; and we are disposed to extend our belief to every circumstance. But in choosing a subject that makes a figure in history, greater precaution is necessary than where the whole is a fiction. In the latter case there is full scope for invention: the author is under no restraint other than that the characters and incidents be just copies of nature. But where the story is founded on truth, no circumstances must be added, but such as connect naturally with what are known to be true; history may be supplied, but must not be contradicted: farther, the subject chosen must be distant in time, or at least in place; for the familiarity of recent persons and events ought to be avoided. Familiarity ought more especially to be avoided in an epic poem, the peculiar character of which is dignity and elevation: modern manners make no figure in such a poem.‡

After Voltaire, no writer, it is probable, will think of rearing an epic poem upon a recent event in the history of his own country. But an event of that kind is perhaps not altogether unqualified for tragedy: it was admitted in Greece; and Shakspeare has employed

\* See *Essays on the Principles of Morality*, edit. 2. p. 291.

† Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 7.

‡ I would not from this observation be thought to undervalue modern manners. The roughness and impetuosity of ancient manners, may be better fitted for an epic poem, without being better fitted for society. But without regard to that circumstance, it is the familiarity of modern manners that unqualifies them for a lofty subject. The dignity of our present manners, will be better understood in future ages, when they are no longer familiar.



it successfully in several of his pieces. One advantage it possesses above fiction, that of more readily engaging our belief, which tends above any other circumstance to raise our sympathy. The scene of comedy is generally laid at home; familiarity is no objection; and we are peculiarly sensible of the ridicule of our own manners.

After a proper subject is chosen, the dividing of it into parts requires some art. The conclusion of a book in an epic poem, or of an act in a play, cannot be altogether arbitrary; nor be intended for so slight a purpose as to make the parts of equal length. The supposed pause at the end of every book, and the real pause at the end of every act, ought always to coincide with some pause in the action. In this respect, a dramatic or epic poem ought to resemble a sentence or period in language, divided into members that are distinguished from each other by proper pauses; or it ought to resemble a piece of music, having a full close at the end, preceded by imperfect closes that contribute to the melody. Every act in a dramatic poem ought, therefore, to close with some incident that makes a pause in the action; for otherwise there can be no pretext for interrupting the representation: it would be absurd to break off in the very heat of action; against which every one would exclaim: the absurdity still remains where the action relents, if it be not actually suspended for some time. This rule is also applicable to an epic poem: though in it a deviation from the rule is less remarkable, because it is in the reader's power to hide the absurdity, by proceeding instantly to another book. The first book of *Paradise Lost* ends without any close, perfect or imperfect: it breaks off abruptly, where Satan, seated on his throne, is prepared to harangue the convoked host of the fallen angels; and the second book begins with the speech. Milton seems to have copied the *Æneid*, of which the two first books are divided much in the same manner. Neither is there any proper pause at the end of the fifth book of the *Æneid*. There is no proper pause at the end of the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*, nor at the end of the eleventh. In the *Iliad*, little attention is given to this rule.

This branch of the subject shall be closed with a general rule—that action being the fundamental part of every composition whether epic or dramatic, the sentiments and tone of language ought to be subservient to the action, so as to appear natural, and proper for the occasion. The application of this rule to our modern plays, would reduce the bulk of them to a skeleton.\*

\* “ En général, il y a beaucoup de discours et peu d'action sur la scène Française. Quelqu'un disoit en sortant d'une pièce de Denis le Tyrann, Je n'ai rien vu, mais j'ai entendu force paroles. Voila ce qu'on peut dire en sortant des pièces Françaises. Racine et Corneille, avec tout leur génie, ne sont eux-mêmes que des parleurs; et leur successeur est le premier qui, à l'imitation des Anglois, ait osé mettre quelquefois la scène en représentation. Communément tout se passe en beaux dialogues bien agencés, bien ronflans, ou l'on voit d'abord que le premier soin de chaque interlocuteur est toujours celui de briller. Presque tout s'enonce en maximes générales. Quelque agités qu'ils puissent être, ils songent toujours plus au public qu'à eux mêmes; une sentence leur coute moins qu'un sentiment; les pièces de Racine et de Molière exceptées, le je est presque aussi

After carrying on together epic and dramatic composition, I shall mention circumstances peculiar to each; beginning with the epic kind. In a theatrical entertainment, which employs both the eye and the ear, it would be a gross absurdity, to introduce upon the stage superior beings in a visible shape. There is no place for such objectiv<sup>e</sup> in an epic poem; and Boileau,\* with many other critics, declares strongly for that sort of machinery in an epic poem. But waving authority, which is apt to impose upon the judgment, let us draw what light we can from reason. I begin with a preliminary remark—that this matter is but indistinctly handled by critics: the poetical privilege of animating insensible objects for enlivening a description, is very different from what is termed *machinery*, where deities, angels, devils, or other supernatural powers, are introduced as real personages, mixing in the action, and contributing to the catastrophe; and yet these are constantly jumbled together in the reasoning. The former is founded on a natural principle;† but can the latter claim the same authority? far from it; nothing is more unnatural. Its effects, at the same time, are deplorable. First, it gives an air of fiction to the whole; and prevents that impression of reality, which is requisite to interest our affections, and to move our passions.‡ This of itself is sufficient to explode machinery, whatever entertainment it may afford to readers of a fantastic taste or irregular imagination. And, next, were it possible, by disguising the fiction, to delude us into a notion of reality, which I think can hardly be; an insuperable objection would still remain, that the aim or end of an epic poem can never be attained in any perfection, where machinery is introduced; for an evident reason, that virtuous emotions cannot be raised successfully, but by the actions of those who are endued with passions and affections like our own; that is, by human actions: and as for moral instruction, it is clear, that none can be drawn from beings who act not upon the same principles with us. A fable in Æsop's manner is no objection to this reasoning: his lions, bulls, and goats, are truly men in disguise: they act and feel in every respect as human beings; and the moral we draw is founded on that supposition. Homer, it is true, introduces the gods into his fable: but the religion of his country authorised that liberty; it being an article in the Grecian creed, that the gods often interpose visibly and bodily in human affairs. I must, however, observe, that Homer's deities do no honor to his poems:

scrupuleusement banni de la scène Française que des écrits de Port Royal; et les passions humaines, aussi modestes que l'humilité Chrétienne, n'y parlent jamais que par *on*. Il y a encore une certaine dignité maniérée dans le geste et dans le propos, qui ne permet jamais à la passion de parler exactement son langage, ni à l'auteur de revêtir son personnage, et de se transporter au lieu de la scène; mais le tient toujours enchaîné sur le théâtre, et sous les yeux des spectateurs. Aussi les situations les plus vives ne lui font-elles jamais oublier un bel arrangement de phrases, ni des attitudes élégantes; et si le désespoir lui plonge un poignard dans le cœur, non content d'observer la décence en tombant comme Polixène, il ne tombe point; la décence le maintient debout après sa mort, et tous ceux qui viennent d'expirer s'en retournent l'instant d'après sur leurs jambes." *Rousseau.*

\* Third Part of his Art of Poetry.

† Chap. 20. Sect. 1.

‡ See Chap. 8. Part I. Sect. 7.

fictions that transgress the bounds of nature, seldom have a good effect; they may inflame the imagination for a moment, but will not be relished by any person of correct taste. They may be of some use to the lower rank of writers; but an author of genius has much finer materials of Nature's production, for elevating his subject, and making it interesting.

One would be apt to think, that Boileau, declaring for the Heathen deities as above, intended them only for embellishing the diction: but unluckily he banishes angels and devils, who undoubtedly make a figure in poetic language, equal to the Heathen deities. Boileau, therefore, by pleading for the latter in opposition to the former, certainly meant, if he had any distinct meaning, that the Heathen deities may be introduced as actors. And, in fact, he himself is guilty of that glaring absurdity, where it is not so pardonable as in an epic poem. In his ode upon the taking of Namur he demands with a most serious countenance, whether the walls were built by Apollo or Neptune? and in relating the passage of the Rhine, *anno* 1672, he describes the god of that river as fighting with all his might to oppose the French monarch; which is confounding fiction with reality at a strange rate. The French writers in general run into this error: wonderful the effect of custom, to hide from them how ridiculous such fictions are!

That this is a capital error in the *Gierusalemme Liberata*, Tasso's greatest admirers must acknowledge: a situation can never be intricate, nor the reader ever in pain about the catastrophe, as long as there is an angel, devil, or magician, to lend a helping hand. Voltaire, in his essay upon epic poetry, talking of the *Pharsalia*, observes judiciously, "That the proximity of time, the notoriety of events, the character of the age, enlightened and political, joined with the solidity of Lucan's subjects, deprived him of poetical fiction." Is it not amazing, that a critic who reasons so justly with respect to others, can be so blind with respect to himself? Voltaire, not satisfied to enrich his language with images drawn from invisible and superior beings, introduces them into the action: in the sixth canto of the *Henriade*, St. Louis appears in person, and terrifies the soldiers; in the seventh canto, St. Louis sends the god of Sleep to Henry; and, in the tenth, the demons of Discord, Fanaticism, War, &c. assist Aumale in a single combat with Turenne, and are driven away by a good angel brandishing the sword of God. To blend such fictitious personages in the same action with mortals, makes a bad figure at any rate; and is intolerable in a history so recent as that of Henry IV. But perfection is not the lot of man.\*

\* When I commenced author, my aim was to amuse, and perhaps to instruct, but never to give pain. I accordingly avoided every living author, till the *Henriade* occurred to me as the best instance I could find for illustrating the doctrine in the text; and I yielded to the temptation, judging that my slight criticisms would never reach M. de Voltaire. They have however reached him; and have, as I am informed, stirred up some resentment. I am afflicted at this information; for what title have I to wound the mind more than the body? It would beside show ingratitude to a celebrated writer, who is highly entertaining, and who has bestowed on me many a delicious morsel. My only excuse for giving offence is, that it was undesigned; for to plead that the censure is just, is no excuse. As the offence

I have tried serious reasonings upon this subject; but ridicule, I suppose, will be found a more successful weapon, which Addison has applied in an elegant manner: "Whereas the time of a general peace is, in all appearance, drawing near; being informed that there are several ingenious persons who intend to show their talents on so happy an occasion, and being willing, as much as in me lies, to prevent that effusion of nonsense, which we have good cause to apprehend; I do hereby strictly require every person who shall write on this subject, to remember that he is a Christian, and not to sacrifice his catechism to his poetry. In order to it, I do expect of him, in the first place, to make his own poem, without depending upon Phœbus for any part of it, or calling out for aid upon any of the muses by name. I do likewise positively forbid the sending of Mercury with any particular message or dispatch relating to the peace; and shall by no means suffer Minerva to take upon her the shape of any plenipotentiary concerned in this great work. I do farther declare, that I shall not allow the destinies to have had an hand in the deaths of the several thousands who have been slain in the late war; being of opinion that all such deaths may be well accounted for by the Christian system of powder and ball. I do therefore strictly forbid the fates to cut the thread of man's life upon any pretence whatsoever, unless it be for the sake of the rhyme. And whereas I have good reason to fear, that Neptune will have a great deal of business on his hands in several poems which we may now suppose are upon the anvil, I do also prohibit his appearance, unless it be done in metaphor, simile, or any very short allusion; and that even here he may not be permitted to enter, but with great caution and circumspection. I desire that the same rule may be extended to his whole fraternity of Heathen gods; it being my design, to condemn every poem to the flames in which Jupiter thunders, or exercises any other act of authority which does not belong to him. In short, I expect that no Pagan agent shall be introduced, or any fact related which a man cannot give credit to with a good conscience. Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to several of the female poets in this nation, who shall still be left in full possession of their gods and goddesses, in the same manner as if this paper had never been written."\*

The marvellous is indeed so much promoted by machinery, that it is not wonderful to find it embraced by the plurality of writers, and perhaps of readers. If indulged at all, it is generally indulged to excess. Homer introduces his deities with no greater ceremony than though they were mortals: and Virgil has still less moderation: a pilot spent with watching cannot fall asleep, and drop into the sea by natural means: one bed cannot receive the two lovers, Æneas and Dido, without the immediate interposition of superior powers. The ridiculous in such fictions, must appear even through the thickest veil of gravity and solemnity.

was public, I take this opportunity to make the apology equally so. I hope it will be satisfactory: perhaps not.—I owe it however to my own character.

\* Spectator, No. 523.

Angels and devils serve equally with heathen deities as materials for figurative language; perhaps better among Christians, because we believe in them, and not in heathen deities. But every one is sensible, as well as Boileau, that the invisible powers in our creed make a much worse figure as actors in a modern poem, than the invisible powers in the heathen creed did in ancient poems; for the cause of which we have not far to seek. The heathen deities, in the opinion of their votaries, were beings elevated one step only above mankind, subject to the same passions, and directed by the same motives; therefore not altogether improper to mix with men in an important action. In our creed, superior beings are placed at such a mighty distance from us, and are of a nature so different, that with no propriety can we appear with them upon the same stage: man, a creature much inferior, loses all dignity in the comparison.

There can be no doubt, that an historical poem admits the embellishment of allegory, as well as of metaphor, simile, or other figure. Moral truth, in particular, is finely illustrated in the allegorical manner: it amuses the fancy to find abstract terms, by a sort of magic, metamorphosed into active beings; and it is highly pleasing to discover a general proposition in a pictured event. But allegorical beings should be confined within their own sphere, and never be admitted to mix in the principal action, nor to co-operate in retarding or advancing the catastrophe. This would have a still worse effect than invisible powers; and I am ready to assign the reason. The impression of real existence, essential to an epic poem, is inconsistent with that figurative existence which is essential to an allegory;\* and therefore no means can more effectually prevent the impression of reality, than to introduce allegorical beings co-operating with those whom we conceive to be really existing. The love-episode, in the *Henriade*,† insufferable by the discordant mixture of allegory with real life, is copied from that of Rinaldo and Armida, in the *Gierusalemme Liberata*, which has no merit to entitle it to be copied. An allegorical object, such as Fame in the *Æneid*, and the 'Temple of Love' in the *Henriade*, may find place in a description: But to introduce Discord as a real personage; imploring the assistance of Love, as another real personage, to enervate the courage of the hero, is making these figurative beings act beyond their sphere, and creating a strange jumble of truth and fiction. The allegory of Sin and Death in the *Paradise Lost*, is, I presume, not generally relished, though it is not entirely of the same nature with what I have been condemning: in a work comprehending the achievements of superior beings, there is more room for fancy than where it is confined to human actions.

What is the true notion of an episode? or how is it to be distinguished from the principal action? Every incident that promotes or retards the catastrophe, must be part of the principal action. This clears the nature of an episode; which may be defined, "An incident connected with the principal action, but contributing neither to advance nor to retard it." The descent of *Æneas* into hell does not

\* See Chap. 20. Sect. 6.

† Canto 9.

advance nor retard the catastrophe, and therefore is an episode. The story of Nisus and Euryalus, producing an alteration in the affairs of the contending parties, is a part of the principal action. The family scene in the sixth book of the *Iliad* is of the same nature; for by Hector's retiring from the field of battle to visit his wife, the Grecians had opportunity to breathe, and even to turn upon the Trojans. The unavoidable effect of an episode, according to this definition, must be, to break the unity of action; and, therefore, it ought never to be indulged, unless to unbend the mind after the fatigue of a long narration. An episode, when such is its purpose, requires the following conditions: it ought to be well connected with the principal action: it ought to be lively and interesting: it ought to be short: and a time ought to be chosen when the principal action relents.\*

In the following beautiful episode, which closes the second book of *Fingal*, all these conditions are united:

Comal was the son of Albion; the chief of a hundred hills. His deer drank of a thousand streams; and a thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness of youth; but his hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sun-beam among women, and her hair was like the wing of the raven. Her soul was fixed on Comal, and she was his companion in the chase. Often met their eyes of love, and happy were their words in secret. But Gormtal loved the maid, the chief of gloomy Ardven. He watched her lone steps on the heath, the foe of unhappy Comal.

One day tired of the chase, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met in the cave of Ronan. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms; a hundred shields of thongs were there, a hundred helms of sounding steel. Rest here, said, he, my love Galvina, thou light of the cave of Ronan: a deer appears on Mora's brow; I go, but soon will return. I fear, said she, dark Gormtal my foe: I will rest here; but soon return, my love.

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch, to try his love, clothed her white side with his armor, and strode from the cave of Ronan. Thinking her his foe, his heart bent high, and his color changed. He drew the bow: the arrow flew: Galvina fell in blood. He ran to the cave with hasty steps, and called the daughter of Conloch. Where art thou, my love? but no answer.——He marked, at length, her heaving heart beating against the mortal arrow. O Conloch's daughter, is it thou! he sunk upon her breast.

The hunters found the hapless pair. Many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came: he fought, and the strangers fell: he searched for death over the field; but who could kill the mighty Comal? Throwing away his shield, an arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his Galvina: their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north.

Next, upon the peculiarities of a dramatic poem. And the first I shall mention is a double plot; one of which must resemble an episode in an epic poem; for it would distract the spectator, instead of entertaining him, if he were forced to attend, at the same time, to two capital plots equally interesting. And even supposing it an under-plot like an episode, it seldom has a good effect in tragedy, of which simplicity is a chief property; for an interesting subject

\* Homer's description of the shield of Achilles is properly introduced at a time when the action relents, and the reader can bear an interruption. But the author of *Telemachus* describes the shield of that young hero in the heat of battle: a very improper time for an interruption.



that engages our affections, occupies our whole attention, and leaves no room for any separate concern.\* Variety is more tolerable in comedy, which pretends only to amuse, without totally occupying the mind. But even there, to make a double plot agreeable, is no slight effort of art: the under-plot ought not to vary greatly in its tone from the principal; for discordant emotions are unpleasant when jumbled together; which, by the way, is an insuperable objection to tragi-comedy. Upon that account, the *Provoked Husband* deserves censure: all the scenes that bring the family of the Wrongheads into action, being ludicrous and farcical, are in a very different tone from the principal scenes, displaying severe and bitter expostulations between Lord Townley and his lady. The same objection touches not the double plot of the *Careless Husband*; the different subjects being sweetly connected, and having only so much variety as to resemble shades of colors harmoniously mixed. But this is not all. The under-plot ought to be connected with that which is principal, so much at least as to employ the same persons: the under-plot ought to occupy the intervals or pauses of the principal action; and both ought to be concluded together. This is the case of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Violent action ought never to be represented on the stage. While the dialogue goes on, a thousand particulars concur to delude us into an impression of reality; genuine sentiments, passionate language, and persuasive gesture: the spectator once engaged, is willing to be deceived, loses sight of himself, and without scruple enjoys the spectacle as a reality. From this absent state he is roused by violent action: he awakes as from a pleasing dream, and gathering his senses about him, finds all to be a fiction. Horace delivers the same rule, and founds it upon the same reason:

Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;  
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;  
Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem:  
Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

\* Racine, in his preface to the tragedy of *Berenice*, is sensible that simplicity is a great beauty in tragedy, but mistakes the cause. "Nothing," says he, "but verisimilitude pleases in tragedy: but where is the verisimilitude, that within the compass of a day, events should be crowded which commonly are extended through months?" This is mistaking the accuracy of imitation for the probability or improbability of future events. I explain myself. The verisimilitude required in tragedy is, that the actions correspond to the manners, and the manners to nature. When this resemblance is preserved, the imitation is just, because it is a true copy of nature. But I deny that the verisimilitude of future events, meaning the probability of future events, is any rule in tragedy. A number of extraordinary events, are, it is true, seldom crowded within the compass of a day: but what seldom happens may happen; and when such events fall out, they appear no less natural than the most ordinary accidents. To make verisimilitude in the sense of probability, a governing rule in tragedy, would annihilate that sort of writing altogether; for it would exclude all extraordinary events, in which the life of tragedy consists. It is very improbable or unlikely, pitching upon any man at random, that he will sacrifice his life and fortune for his mistress or for his country: yet when that event happens, supposing it conformable to the character, we recognize the verisimilitude as to nature, whatever want of verisimilitude or of probability there was *a priori* that such would be the event.



Nor let Medea's hand destroy  
Before the gaping crowd her boy—  
Nor wicked Atreus full in view  
A dish of human entrails stew,  
Or Cadmus turn by change absurd  
A snake, or Progne be a bird.  
When thus your scenes you represent,  
Disgust forbids me to assent.

The French critics join with Horace in excluding blood from the stage; but overlooking the most substantial objection, they urge only that it is barbarous, and shocking to a polite audience. The Greeks had no notion of such delicacy, or rather effeminacy: witness the murder of Clytemnestra by her son Orestes, passing behind the scene as represented by Sophocles: her voice is heard calling out for mercy, bitter expostulations on his part, loud shrieks upon her being stabbed, and then a deep silence. I appeal to every person of feeling, whether this scene be not more horrible than if the deed had been committed in sight of the spectators upon a sudden gust of passion. If Corneille, in representing the affair between Horatius and his sister, upon which murder ensues behind the scene, had no other view but to remove from the spectators a shocking action, he was guilty of a capital mistake: for murder in cold blood, which in some measure was the case as represented, is more shocking to a polite audience, even where the conclusive stab is not seen, than the same act performed in their presence by violent and unpremeditated passion, as suddenly repented of as committed. I heartily agree with Addison,\* that no part of this incident ought to have been represented, but reserved for a narrative, with every alleviating circumstance in favor of the hero.

A few words upon the dialogue; which ought to be so conducted as to be a true representation of nature. I talk not here of the sentiments, nor of the language; for these come under different heads: I talk of what properly belongs to dialogue-writing; where every single speech, short or long, ought to arise from what is said by the former speaker, and furnish matter for what comes after, till the end of the scene. In this view, all the speeches, from first to last, represent so many links of one continued chain. No author, ancient or modern, possesses the art of dialogue equal to Shakspeare. Dryden, in that particular, may justly be placed as his opposite: he frequently introduces three or four persons speaking upon the same subject, each throwing out his own notions separately, without regarding what is said by the rest: take for an example the first scene of *Aurenzebe*. Sometimes he makes a number club in relating an event, not to a stranger, supposed ignorant of it; but to one another, for the sake merely of speaking: of which notable sort of dialogue, we have a specimen in the first scene of the first part of the *Conquest of Granada*. In the second part of the same tragedy, scene second, the king, Abenamar, and Zulema, make their separate observations, like so many soliloquies, upon the fluctuating temper of the mob. A dialogue so uncouth, puts one in mind of two shepherds in a pastoral,

\* Spectator, No. 44.

excited by a prize to pronounce verses alternately, each in praise of his own mistress.

This manner of dialogue-writing, beside an unnatural air, has another bad effect: it stays the course of the action, because it is not productive of any consequence. In Congreve's comedies, the action is often suspended to make way for a play of wit. But of this more particularly in the chapter immediately following.

No fault is more common among writers, than to prolong a speech after the impatience of the person to whom it is addressed ought to prompt him or her to break in. Consider only how the impatient actor is to behave in the mean time. To express his impatience in violent action without interrupting, would be unnatural; and yet to dissemble his impatience, by appearing cool where he ought to be highly inflamed, would be no less so.

Rhyme being unnatural and disgusting in dialogue, is happily banished from our theatre: the only wonder is that it ever found admittance, especially among a people accustomed to the more manly freedom of Shakspeare's dialogue. By banishing rhyme, we have gained so much, as never once to dream of any farther improvement. And yet, however suitable blank verse may be to elevated characters and warm passions, it must appear improper and affected in the mouths of the lower sort. Why then should it be a rule, that every scene in tragedy must be in blank verse? Shakspeare, with great judgment, has followed a different rule; which is, to intermix prose with verse, and only to employ the latter where it is required by the importance or dignity of the subject. Familiar thoughts and ordinary fact ought to be expressed in plain language: to hear, for example, a footman deliver a simple message in blank verse, must appear ridiculous to every one who is not biassed by custom. In short, that variety of characters and of situations, which is the life of a play, requires not only a suitable variety in the sentiments, but also in the diction.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE THREE UNITIES.

An entire action formed, when the incidents are connected by the relation of cause and effect—Unity of action, a beauty; but a plurality of unconnected fables, a fault—The stating of facts in the order of time to be departed from for the sake of higher beauties—In a play each scene to hasten or retard the catastrophe—All the facts in an historical fable, to have a natural connection by a relation to the grand event—The mind satisfied with a slighter degree of unity in a picture than in a poem—The unities of time and place rigidly adhered to on the ancient stage, and inculcated by modern critics—Unity of time and place not required in a narrative poem—The necessary limits of dramatic representation—The refutation of this observation—The origin of tragedy in Greece—The improvements of Thespis and Æschylus—The first scene the prologue—In the second scene the chorus introduced and continued—The course pursued by Sophocles and Euripides—The advantages and the disadvantages of the chorus—The advantages of the chorus supplied in English by the proper use of music—Defects of the Greek drama on account of its unity of place and of time—The place of action to be constantly occupied—The stage to be constantly occupied during the action—Every person introduced upon the stage to be connected with those in possession of it.

In the first chapter, is explained the pleasure we have in a chain of connected facts. In histories of the world, of a country, of a people, this pleasure is faint, because the connections are slight or obscure. We find more entertainment in biography; because the incidents are connected by their relation to a person who makes a figure, and commands our attention. But the greatest entertainment is in the history of a single event, supposing it interesting; and the reason is, that the facts and circumstances are connected by the strongest of all relations, that of cause and effect: a number of facts that give birth to each other form a delightful train; and we have great mental enjoyment in our progress from the beginning to the end.

But this subject merits a more particular discussion. When we consider the chain of causes and effects in the material world, independent of purpose, design, or thought, we find a number of incidents in succession, without beginning, middle, or end: every thing that happens is both a cause and an effect; being the effect of what goes before, and the cause of what follows: one incident may affect us more, another less; but all of them are links in the universal chain: the mind, in viewing these incidents, cannot rest or settle ultimately upon any one; but is carried along in the train without any close.

But when the intellectual world is taken under view, in conjunction with the material, the scene is varied. Man acts with deliberation, will, and choice: he aims at some end, glory, for example, or riches, or conquest, the procuring of happiness to individuals, or to his country in general: he proposes means, and lays plans to attain the end purposed. Here are a number of facts or incidents leading to the end in view, the whole composing one chain by the relation of cause and effect. In running over a series of such facts or incidents, we cannot rest upon any one; because they are presented to us as means only, leading to some end: but we rest with satisfaction upon the end or ultimate event; because there the purpose or aim of the

chief person or persons is accomplished. This indicates the beginning, the middle, and the end, of what Aristotle calls *an entire action*.\* The story naturally begins with describing those circumstances which move the principal person to form a plan, in order to compass some desired event: the prosecution of that plan and the obstructions, carry the reader into the heat of action: the middle is properly where the action is the most involved; and the end is where the event is brought about, and the plan accomplished.

A plan thus happily accomplished after many obstructions, affords wonderful delight to the reader; to produce which, a principle mentioned above† mainly contributes, the same that disposes the mind to complete every work commenced, and in general to carry every thing to a conclusion.

I have given the foregoing example of a plan crowned with success, because it affords the clearest conception of a beginning, a middle, and an end, in which consists *unity* of action; and indeed stricter unity cannot be imagined than in that case. But an action may have unity, or a beginning, middle, and end, without so intimate a relation of parts; as where the catastrophe is different from what is intended or desired, which frequently happens in our best tragedies. In the *Æneid*, the hero, after many obstructions, makes his plan effectual. The *Iliad* is formed upon a different model: it begins with the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon; goes on to describe the several effects produced by that cause; and ends in a reconciliation. Here is unity of action, no doubt, a beginning, a middle, and an end; but inferior to that of the *Æneid*, which will thus appear. The mind has a propensity to go forward in the chain of history: it keeps always in view the expected event; and when the incidents or under-parts are connected by their relation to the event, the mind runs sweetly and easily along them. This pleasure we have in the *Æneid*. It is not altogether so pleasant, as in the *Iliad*, to connect effects by their common cause; for such connection forces the mind to a continual retrospect: looking back is like walking backward.

Homer's plan is still more defective, upon another account, that the events described are but imperfectly connected with the wrath of Achilles, their cause: his wrath did not exert itself in action; and the misfortunes of his countrymen were but negatively the effects of his wrath, by depriving them of his assistance.

If unity of action be a capital beauty in a fable imitative of human affairs, a plurality of unconnected fables must be a capital deformity. For the sake of variety, we indulge an under-plot that is connected with the principal: but two unconnected events are extremely unpleasant, even where the same actors are engaged in both. Ariosto is quite licentious in that particular: he carries on at the same time a plurality of unconnected stories. His only excuse is, that his plan is perfectly well adjusted to his subject; for every thing in the *Orlando Furioso* is wild and extravagant.

Though to state facts in the order of time is natural, yet that order

\* Post. cap. 6. See also cap. 7.

† Chap. 8.

may be varied for the sake of conspicuous beauties.\* If, for example, a noted story, cold and simple in its first movements, be made the subject of an epic poem, the reader may be hurried into the heat of action: reserving the preliminaries for a conversation-piece, if thought necessary; and that method, at the same time, has a peculiar beauty from being dramatic.† But a privilege that deviates from nature ought to be sparingly indulged; and yet romance-writers make no difficulty of presenting to the reader, without the least preparation, unknown persons engaged in some arduous adventure equally unknown. In *Cassandra*, two personages, who afterward are discovered to be the heroes of the fable, start up completely armed upon the banks of the Euphrates, and engage in a single combat.‡

A play analyzed, is a chain of connected facts, of which each scene makes a link. Each scene, accordingly, ought to produce some incident relative to the catastrophe or ultimate event, by advancing or retarding it. A scene that produces no incident, and for that reason may be termed *barren*, ought not to be indulged, because it breaks the unity of action: a barren scene can never be entitled to a place, because the chain is complete without it. In the *Old Bachelor*, the 3d scene of act 2. and all that follow to the end of that act, are mere conversation-pieces, productive of no consequence. The 10th and 11th scenes, act 3, *Double Dealer*, the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th scenes, act 1, *Lore for Love*, are of the same kind. Neither is *The Way of the World* entirely guiltless of such scenes. It will be no justification, that they help to display characters: it were better, like Dryden, in his *dramatis personæ*, to describe characters beforehand, which would not break the chain of action. But a writer of genius has no occasion for such artifice: he can display the characters of his personages much more to the life in sentiment and action. How successfully is this done by Shakspeare! in whose works there is not to be found a single barren scene.

Upon the whole, it appears, that all the facts in an historical fable, ought to have a mutual connection, by their common relation to the grand event or catastrophe. And this relation, in which the *unity* of action consists, is equally essential to epic and dramatic compositions.

In handling unity of action, it ought not to escape observation, that the mind is satisfied with slighter unity in a picture than in a poem; because the perceptions of the former are more lively than the ideas of the latter. In *Hogarth's Enraged Musician*, we have a collection of every grating sound in nature, without any mutual connection except that of place. But the horror they give to the delicate ear of an Italian fidler, who is represented almost in

\* See Chap. 1.

† See Chap. 21.

‡ I am sensible that a commencement of this sort is much relished by readers disposed to the marvellous. Their curiosity is raised, and they are much tickled in its gratification. But curiosity is at an end with the first reading, because the personages are no longer unknown; and therefore at the second reading, a commencement so artificial loses its power even over the vulgar. A writer of genius prefers lasting beauties.

convulsions, bestows unity upon the piece, with which the mind is satisfied.

How far the unities of time and of place are essential, is a question of greater intricacy. These unities were strictly observed in the Greek and Roman theatres; and they are inculcated by the French and English critics, as essential to every dramatic composition. They are also acknowledged by our best poets, though in practice they make frequent deviation, which they pretend not to justify, against the practice of the Greeks and Romans, and against the solemn decision of their own countrymen. But in the course of this inquiry it will be made evident, that in this article we are under no necessity to copy the ancients; and that our critics are guilty of a mistake, in admitting no greater latitude of place and time than was admitted in Greece and Rome.

Suffer me only to premise, that the unities of place and time, are not, by the most rigid critics, required in a narrative poem. In such a composition, if it pretend to copy nature, these unities would be absurd; because real events are seldom confined within narrow limits, either of place or of time. And yet we can follow history, or an historical fable, through all its changes, with the greatest facility: we never once think of measuring the real time by what is taken in reading; nor of forming any connection between the place of action and that which we occupy.

I am sensible, that the drama differs so far from the epic, as to admit different rules. It will be observed, "That an historical fable, intended for reading solely, is under no limitation of time nor of place, more than a genuine history; but that a dramatic composition cannot be accurately represented, unless it be limited, as its representation is, to one place and to a few hours; and therefore that it can admit no fable but what has these properties; because it would be absurd to compose a piece for representation that cannot be justly represented." This argument, I acknowledge, has at least a plausible appearance; and yet one is apt to suspect some fallacy, considering that no critic, however strict, has ventured to confine the unities of place and of time within so narrow bounds.\*

A view of the Grecian drama, compared with our own, may perhaps relieve us from this dilemma: if they be differently constructed, as shall be made evident, it is possible that the foregoing reasoning may not be equally applicable to both. This is an article that, with relation to the present subject, has not been examined by any writer.

All authors agree, that tragedy in Greece was derived from the hymns in praise of Bacchus, which were sung in parts by a chorus. Thespis, to relieve the singers and for the sake of variety, introduced one actor, whose province it was to explain historically the subject

\* Bossu, after observing, with wondrous critical sagacity, that winter is an improper season for an epic poem, and night no less improper for tragedy; admits however, that an epic poem may be spread through the whole summer months, and a tragedy through the whole sunshine hours of the longest summer-day. *Du poeme epique*, l. 3. chap. 12. At that rate an English tragedy may be longer than a French tragedy; and in Nova Zembla the time of a tragedy and of an epic poem may be the same.

of the song, and who occasionally represented one or other personage. Eschylus, introducing a second actor, formed the dialogue, by which the performance became dramatic; and the actors were multiplied when the subject represented made it necessary. But still, the chorus, which gave a beginning to tragedy, was considered as an essential part. The first scene, generally, unfolds the preliminary circumstances that lead to the grand event: and this scene is by Aristotle termed the *prologue*. In the second scene, where the action properly begins, the chorus is introduced, which, as originally, continues upon the stage during the whole performance: the chorus frequently makes one in the dialogue; and when the dialogue happens to be suspended, the chorus, during the interval, is employed in singing. Sophocles adheres to this plan religiously. Euripides is not altogether so correct. In some of his pieces, it becomes necessary to remove the chorus for a little time. But when that unusual step is risked, matters are so ordered as not to interrupt the representation. the chorus never leave the stage of their own accord, but at the command of some principal personage, who constantly waits their return.

Thus the Grecian drama is a continued representation without interruption—a circumstance that merits attention. A continued representation without a pause, affords no opportunity to vary the place of action, nor to prolong the time of the action beyond that of the representation. To a representation so confined in place and time, the foregoing reasoning is strictly applicable: a real or feigned action that is brought to a conclusion after considerable intervals of time and frequent changes of place, cannot accurately be copied in a representation that admits no latitude in either. Hence it is, that the unities of place and of time, were, or ought to have been, strictly observed in the Greek tragedies; which is made necessary by the very constitution of their drama, for it is absurd to compose a tragedy that cannot be justly represented.

Modern critics, who for our drama pretend to establish rules founded on the practice of the Greeks, are guilty of an egregious blunder. The unities of place and of time were in Greece, as we see, a matter of necessity not of choice; and I am now ready to show, that if we submit to such fetters, it must be from choice, not necessity. This will be evident upon taking a view of the constitution of our drama, which differs widely from that of Greece: whether more or less perfect is a different point, to be handled afterward. By dropping the chorus, opportunity is afforded to divide the representation by intervals of time, during which the stage is evacuated, and the spectacle suspended. This qualifies our drama for subjects spread through a wide space both of time and of place: the time supposed to pass during the suspension of the representation is not measured by the time of the suspension; and any place may be supposed when the representation is renewed, with as much facility as when it commenced: by which means, many subjects can be justly represented in our theatres, that were excluded from those of ancient Greece. This doctrine may be illustrated, by comparing a modern



play to a set of historical pictures: let us suppose them five in number, and the resemblance will be complete. Each of the pictures resembles an act in one of our plays: there must necessarily be the strictest unity of place and of time in each picture; and the same necessity requires these two unities during each act of a play, because during an act there is no interruption in the spectacle. Now, when we view in succession a number of such historical pictures, let it be, for example, the history of Alexander by Le Brun, we have no difficulty to conceive, that months or years have passed between the events exhibited in two different pictures, though the interruption is imperceptible in passing our eye from the one to the other; and we have as little difficulty to conceive a change of place, however great. In which view, there is truly no difference between five acts of a modern play, and five such pictures. Where the representation is suspended, we can with the greatest facility suppose any length of time or any change of place: the spectator, it is true, may be conscious that the real time and place are not the same with what are employed in the representation: but this is a work of reflection; and by the same reflection he may also be conscious, that Garrick is not King Lear, that the playhouse is not Dover Cliffs, nor the noise he hears thunder and lightning. In a word, after an interruption of the representation, it is no more difficult for a spectator to imagine a new place, or a different time, than at the commencement of the play, to imagine himself at Rome, or in a period of time two thousand years back. And indeed, it is abundantly ridiculous, that a critic, who is willing to hold candle-light for sun-shine, and some painted canvasses for a palace or a prison, should be so scrupulous about admitting any latitude of place or of time in the fable, beyond what is necessary in the representation.

There are, I acknowledge, some effects of great latitude in time that ought never to be indulged in a composition for the theatre. Nothing can be more absurd, than at the close to exhibit a full-grown person who appears a child at the beginning: the mind rejects, as contrary to all probability, such latitude of time as is requisite for a change so remarkable. The greatest change from place to place has not altogether the same bad effect. In the bulk of human affairs place is not material; and the mind, when occupied with an interesting event, is little regardful of minute circumstances: these may be varied at will, because they scarcely make any impression.

But though I have taken arms to rescue modern poets from the despotism of modern critics, I would not be understood to justify liberty without any reserve. An unbounded licence with relation to place and time, is faulty, for a reason that seems to have been overlooked, which is, that it seldom fails to break the unity of action. In the ordinary course of human affairs, single events, such as are fit to be represented on the stage, are confined to a narrow spot, and commonly employ no great extent of time: we accordingly seldom find strict unity of action in a dramatic composition, where any remarkable latitude is indulged in these particulars. I say farther, that a composition which employs but one place, and requires not a

greater length of time than is necessary for the representation, is so much the more perfect: because the confining of an event within so narrow bounds, contributes to the unity of action; and also prevents that labor, however slight, which the mind must undergo in imagining frequent changes of place and many intervals of time. But still I must insist, that such limitation of place and time as was necessary in the Grecian drama, is no rule to us; and, therefore, that though such limitation adds one beauty more to the composition, it is at best but a refinement, which may justly give place to a thousand beauties more substantial. And I may add, that it is extremely difficult, I was about to say impracticable, to contract within the Grecian limits, any fable so fruitful of incidents in number and variety, as to give full scope to the fluctuation of passion.

It may now appear, that critics who put the unities of place and of time upon the same footing with the unity of action, making them all equally essential, have not attended to the nature and constitution of the modern drama. If they admit an interrupted representation, with which no writer finds fault, it is absurd to reject its greater advantage—that of representing many interesting subjects excluded from the Grecian stage. If there needs must be a reformation, why not restore the ancient chorus and the ancient continuity of action? There is certainly no medium: for to admit an interruption without relaxing from the strict unities of place and of time, is in effect to load us with all the inconveniencies of the ancient drama, and at the same time to withhold from us its advantages.

The only proper question, therefore, is, whether our model be or be not a real improvement. This, indeed, may fairly be called in question; and in order to a comparative trial, some particulars must be premised. When a play begins, we have no difficulty to adjust our imagination to the scene of action, however distant it may be in time or in place; because we know that the play is a representation only. The case is very different after we are engaged: it is the perfection of representation to hide itself, to impose on the spectator, and to produce in him an impression of reality, as if he were a spectator of a real event;\* but any interruption annihilates that impression, by rousing him out of his waking dream, and unhappily restoring him to his senses. So difficult it is to support the impression of reality, that much slighter interruptions than the interval between two acts, are sufficient to dissolve the charm: in the fifth act of the *Mourning Bride*, the three first scenes are in a room of state, the fourth in a prison; and the change is operated by shifting the scene, which is done in a trice: but however quick the transition may be, it is impracticable to impose upon the spectators, so as to make them conceive that they are actually carried from the palace to the prison; they immediately reflect, that the palace and prison are imaginary, and that the whole is a fiction.

From these premises, one will naturally be led, at first view, to pronounce the frequent interruptions in the modern drama to be an imperfection. It will occur, "That every interruption must have

\* Chap. 2. Part 1. Sect. 7.

the effect to banish the dream of reality, and with it to banish our concern, which cannot subsist while we are conscious that all is a fiction; and, therefore, that in the modern drama sufficient time is not afforded for fluctuation and swelling of passion, like what is afforded in that of Greece, where there is no interruption." This reasoning, it must be owned, has a specious appearance: but we must not become faint-hearted upon the first repulse; let us rally our troops for a second engagement.

Considering attentively the ancient drama, we find that though the representation is never interrupted, the principal action is suspended not less frequently than in the modern drama: there are five acts in each; and the only difference is, that in the former, when the action is suspended as it is at the end of every act, opportunity is taken of the interval to employ the chorus in singing. Hence it appears, that the Grecian continuity of representation cannot have the effect to prolong the impression of reality: to banish that impression, a pause in the action while the chorus is employed in singing, is no less effectual than a total suspension of the representation.

But to open a larger view, I am ready to show, that a representation with proper pauses, is better qualified for making a deep impression, than a continued representation without a pause. This will be evident from the following considerations. Representation cannot very long support an impression of reality; for when the spirits are exhausted by close attention and by the agitation of passion, an uneasiness ensues, which never fails to banish the waking dream. Now supposing the time that a man can employ with strict attention without wandering, to be no greater than is requisite for a single act—a supposition that cannot be far from truth; it follows, that a continued representation of longer endurance than an act, instead of giving scope to fluctuation and swelling of passion, would overstrain the attention, and produce a total absence of mind. In that respect, the four pauses have a fine effect; for by affording to the audience a seasonable respite when the impression of reality is gone, and while nothing material is in agitation, they relieve the mind from its fatigue; and consequently prevent a wandering of thought at the very time possibly of the most interesting scenes.

In one article, indeed, the Grecian model has greatly the advantage. Its chorus during an interval not only preserves alive the impressions made upon the audience, but also prepares their hearts finely for new impressions. In our theatres, on the contrary, the audience, at the end of every act, being left to trifle time away, lose every warm impression; and they begin the next act cool and unconcerned, as at the commencement of the representation; this is a gross malady in our theatrical representations, but a malady that luckily is not incurable. To revive the Grecian chorus, would be to revive the Grecian slavery of place and time; but I can figure a detached chorus coinciding with a pause in the representation, as the ancient chorus did with a pause in the principal action.

What objection, for example, can there lie against music between the acts, vocal and instrumental, adapted to the subject! Such detached chorus, without putting us under any limitation of time or place, would recruit the spirits, and would preserve entire the tone, if not the tide of passion. The music, after an act, should commence in the tone of the preceding passion, and be gradually varied till it accord with the tone of the passion that is to succeed in the next act. The music and the representation would both of them be gainers by their conjunction; which will thus appear. Music that accords with the present tone of mind, is, on that account, doubly agreeable; and accordingly, though music singly has not power to raise a passion, it tends greatly to support a passion already raised. Farther, music prepares us for the passion that follows, by making cheerful, tender, melancholy, or animated impressions, as the subject requires. Take for an example the first scene of the *Mourning Bride*, where soft music, in a melancholy strain, prepares us for Almeria's deep distress. In this manner, music and representation support each other delightfully: the impression made upon the audience by the representation, is a fine preparation for the music that succeeds; and the impression made by the music, is a fine preparation for the representation that succeeds. It appears to me evident, that, by some such contrivance, the modern drama may be improved, so as to enjoy the advantage of the ancient chorus without its slavish limitation of place and time. And as to music in particular, I cannot figure any means that would tend more to its improvement: composers, those for the stage at least, would be reduced to the happy necessity of studying and imitating nature; instead of deviating, according to the present mode, into wild, fantastic, and unnatural conceits. But we must return to our subject, and finish the comparison between the ancient and the modern drama.

The numberless improprieties forced upon the Greek dramatic poets by the constitution of their drama, may be sufficient, one should think, to make us prefer the modern drama, even abstracting from the improvement proposed. To prepare the reader for this article, it must be premised, that as in the ancient drama the place of action never varies, a place necessarily must be chosen, to which every person may have access without any improbability. This confines the scene to some open place, generally the court or area before a palace; which excludes from the Grecian theatre transactions within doors, though these commonly are the most important. Such cruel restraint is of itself sufficient to cramp the most pregnant invention; and accordingly Greek writers, in order to preserve unity of place, are reduced to woful improprieties. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides,\* Phedra, distressed in mind and body, is carried without any pretext from her palace to the place of action: is there laid upon a couch, unable to support herself upon her limbs, and made to utter many things improper to be heard by a number of women who form the chorus: and what is still more improper, her female attendant uses the strongest entreaties to make her reveal the

\* Act 1. Sc. 6.

secret cause of her anguish; which at last Phedra, contrary to decency and probability, is prevailed upon to do in presence of that very chorus.\* *Alcestes*, in Euripides, at the point of death, is brought from the palace to the place of action, groaning, and lamenting her untimely fate.† In the *Trachiniens* of Sophocles,‡ a secret is imparted to Dejanira, the wife of Hercules, in presence of the chorus. In the tragedy of *Iphigenia*, the messenger employed to inform Clitemnestra that Iphigenia was sacrificed, stops short at the place of action, and with a loud voice calls the Queen from her palace to hear the news. Again, in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the necessary presence of the chorus forces Euripides into a gross absurdity, which is to form a secret in their hearing;§ and to disguise the absurdity, much court is paid to the chorus, not one woman but a number, to engage them to secrecy. In the *Medea* of Euripides, that princess makes no difficulty, in presence of the chorus, to plot the death of her husband, of his mistress, and of her father the king of Corinth, all by poison. It was necessary to bring Medea upon the stage, and there is but one place of action, which is always occupied by the chorus. This scene closes the second act: and in the end of the third, she frankly makes the chorus her confidants in plotting the murder of her own children. Terence, by identity of place, is often forced to make a conversation within doors be heard on the open street: the cries of a woman in labor are there heard distinctly.

The Greek poets are not less hampered by unity of time than by that of place. In the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, that prince is banished at the end of the fourth act; and in the first scene of the following act, a messenger relates to Theseus the whole particulars of the death of Hippolytus by the sea-monster: that remarkable event must have occupied many hours; and yet in the representation, it is confined to the time employed by the chorus upon the song at the end of the 4th act. The inconsistency is still greater in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*:|| the song could not exhaust half an hour; and yet the incident: supposed to have happened during that time, could not naturally have been transacted in less than half a day.

The Greek artists are forced, no less frequently, to transgress another rule, derived also from a continued representation. The rule is, that as a vacuity, however momentary, interrupts the representation, it is necessary that the place of action be constantly occupied. Sophocles, with regard to that rule as well as to others, is generally correct. But Euripides cannot bear such restraint: he often evacuates the stage, and leaves it empty for others. *Iphigenia in Tauris*, after pronouncing a soliloquy in the first scene, leaves the place of action, and is succeeded by Orestes and Pylades: they, after some conversation, walk off; and Iphigenia re-enters, accompanied with the chorus. In the *Alcestes*, which is of the same author, the place of action is void at the end of the third act. It is true, that w

\* Act 2. Sc. 2.

† Act 2.

‡ Act 2. Sc. 1.

§ Act 4. at the close.

|| Act 5. Sc. 4.

cover the irregularity, and to preserve the representation in motion, Euripides is careful to fill the stage without loss of time: but this still is an interruption, and a link of the chain broken; for during the change of the actors, there must be a space of time, during which the stage is occupied by neither set. It makes indeed a more remarkable interruption, to change the place of action as well as the actors; but that was not practicable upon the Grecian stage.

It is hard to say upon what model Terence has formed his plays. Having no chorus, there is a pause in the representation at the end of every act. But advantage is not taken of the cessation, even to vary the place of action: for the street is always chosen, where every thing passing may be seen by every person; and by that choice, the most sprightly and interesting parts of the action, which commonly pass within doors, are excluded; witness the last act of the *Eunuch*. He has submitted to the like slavery with respect to time. In a word, a play with a regular chorus, is not more confined in place and time than his plays are. Thus a zealous sectary follows implicitly ancient forms and ceremonies, without once considering whether their introductive cause be still subsisting. Plautus, of a bolder genius than Terence, makes good use of the liberty afforded by an interrupted representation: he varies the place of action upon all occasions, when the variation suits his purpose.

The intelligent reader will by this time understand, that I plead for no change of place in our plays but after an interval, nor for any latitude in point of time but what falls in with an interval. The unities of place and time ought to be strictly observed during each act; for during the representation, there is no opportunity for the smallest deviation from either. Hence it is an essential requisite, that during an act the stage be always occupied; for even a momentary vacuity makes an interval or interruption. Another rule is no less essential: it would be a gross breach of the unity of action, to exhibit upon the stage two separate actions at the same time; and therefore, to preserve that unity, it is necessary that each personage introduced during an act, be linked to those in possession of the stage, so as to join all in one action. These things follow from the very conception of an act, which admits not the slightest interruption: the moment the representation is intermitted, there is an end of that act; and we have no notion of a new act, but where, after a pause or interval, the representation is again put in motion. French writers, generally speaking, are correct in this particular. The English, on the contrary, are so irregular, as scarcely to deserve a criticism. Actors, during the same act, not only succeed each other in the same place without connection; but what is still less excusable, they frequently succeed each other in different places. This change of place in the same act, ought never to be indulged; for, beside breaking the unity of the act, it has a disagreeable effect. After an interval, the imagination readily adapts itself to any place that is necessary, as readily as at the commencement of the play; but during the representation, we reject change of place. From the foregoing censure must be excepted the *Mourning Bride* of Congreve, where regularity



concurs with the beauty of sentiment and of language, to make it one of the most complete pieces of which England can boast. I must acknowledge, however, that in point of regularity, this elegant performance is not altogether unexceptionable. In the four first acts, the unities of place and time are strictly observed: but in the last act, there is a capital error with respect to unity of place; for in the first three scenes of that act, the place of action is a room of state which is changed to a prison in the fourth scene: the chain also of the actors is broken; as the persons introduced in the prison, are different from those who made their appearance in the room of state. This remarkable interruption of the representation, makes in effect two acts instead of one: and therefore, if it be a rule that a play ought not to consist of more acts than five, this performance is so far defective in point of regularity. I may add, that even admitting six acts, the irregularity would not be altogether removed, without a longer pause in the representation than is allowed in the acting; for more than a momentary interruption is requisite for enabling the imagination readily to fall in with a new place, or with a wide space of time. In *The Way of the World*, of the same author, unity of place is preserved during every act, and a stricter unity of time during the whole play, than is necessary.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

## GARDENING AND ARCHITECTURE.

Gardening, originally a useful, now a fine art—Architecture also, formerly a useful, now a fine art—Two different views afforded by both—Destined either for use or beauty—Foundation for criticism in these arts, laid in the emotion they excite—Poetry holds the first place—Painting and sculpture confined to objects of sight—Emotions of beauty, grandeur, and melancholy, raised by gardening—The beauties of regularity, order, and proportion, more conspicuous in architecture than in gardening—Advantage of gardening—Two things wanting to bring architecture to perfection—Simplicity essential to gardening—The bad effects of profuse ornaments—A small field to be regularly laid out; not so with a large garden—A small spot embellished with natural objects, the simplest plan for a garden—Artificial statues and buildings belong to the more complex—To pass from a gay object to a ruin has a bad effect—*Vice versa*, a good effect—Similar emotions to be raised together—The best method for replenishing a field—A single garden distinguished from a plurality by its unity—Regularity required in that part of a garden adjoining a dwelling house—A larger prospect than can be taken at one view, never to be taken—Unnatural objects to be rejected—Faint imitations of nature to be avoided—Things trivial to be excluded—A labyrinth not justified—A winding walk—An oblique avenue—A garden on a flat to be highly ornamented—A ruin to be in the Gothic form—An animal spouting water unnatural—Summer and winter gardens in hot and cold countries—The practice of the Chinese—The effect of rough uncultivated grounds; and of a garden—A garden necessary to a college—Different kinds of buildings—Those designed for utility to correspond to that design—A heathen temple—A palace—A dwelling—The proportions of doors, windows, and steps—The different forms of the rooms of a dwelling—No resemblance between musical proportion and architecture—The comparison between proportion in number, and in quantity absurd—Regularity and proportion essential to buildings destined to please the eye—Every building to have an expression corresponding to its destination—Climax to be observed—Grandeur to be the chief study of architecture—Directions for ornaments—Directions about the columns—The Grecian order—The distinction between the Ionic and the Corinthian—Columns distinguished by their destination into three kinds—The ornaments that belong to each—The effect of gardening and architecture upon manners.

THE books we have upon architecture and upon embellishing ground, abound in practical instruction, necessary for a mechanic: but in vain should we rummage them for rational principles to improve our taste. In a general system, it might be thought sufficient to have unfolded the principles that govern these and other fine arts, leaving the application to the reader: but as I would neglect no opportunity of showing the extensive influence of these principles, the purpose of the present chapter is to apply them to gardening and architecture; but without intending any regular plan of these favorite arts, which would be unsuitable, not only to the nature of this work, but to the experience of its author.

Gardening was at first a useful art: in the garden of Alcinous, described by Homer, we find nothing done for pleasure merely. But gardening is now improved into a fine art; and when we talk of a garden without any epithet, a pleasure garden, by way of eminence, is understood. The garden of Alcinous, in modern language, was but a kitchen-garden. Architecture has run the same course: it continued many ages a useful art merely, without aspiring to be

classed with the fine arts. Architecture, therefore, and gardening, being useful arts as well as fine arts, afford two different views. The reader, however, will not here expect rules for improving any work of art in point of utility; it being no part of my plan to treat of any useful art as such: but there is a beauty in utility; and in discoursing of beauty that of utility must not be neglected. This leads us to consider gardens and buildings in different views: they may be destined for use solely, for beauty solely, or for both. Such variety of destination, bestows upon these arts a great command of beauties, complex no less than various. Hence the difficulty of forming an accurate taste in gardening and architecture; and hence that difference and wavering of taste in these arts, greater than in any art that has but a single destination.

Architecture and gardening cannot otherwise entertain the mind, than by raising certain agreeable emotions or feelings; with which we must begin, as the true foundation of all the rules of criticism that govern these arts. Poetry, as to its power of raising emotions, possesses justly the first place among the fine arts; for scarcely any one emotion of human nature is beyond its reach. Painting and sculpture are more circumscribed, having the command of no emotions but of what are raised by sight: they are peculiarly successful in expressing painful passions, which are displayed by external signs extremely legible.\* Gardening, besides the emotions of beauty from regularity, order, proportion, color, and utility, can raise emotions of grandeur, of sweetness, of gayety, of melancholy, of wildness, and even of surprise or wonder. In architecture, the beauties of regularity, order, and proportion, are still more conspicuous than in gardening; but as to the beauty of color, architecture is far inferior. Grandeur can be expressed in a building, perhaps more successfully than in a garden; but as to the other emotions above mentioned, architecture hitherto has not been brought to the perfection of expressing them distinctly. To balance that defect, architecture can display the beauty of utility in the highest perfection.

Gardening indeed possesses one advantage, never to be equalled in the other art: in various scenes, it can raise successively all the different emotions above mentioned. But to produce that delicious effect, the garden must be extensive, so as to admit a slow succession: for a small garden, comprehended at one view, ought to be confined to one expression;† it may be gay, it may be sweet, it may be gloomy; but an attempt to mix these, would create a jumble of emotions not a little unpleasant.‡ For the same reason, a building, even the most magnificent, is necessarily confined to one expression.

Architecture, considered as a fine art, instead of being a rival to gardening in its progress, seems not far advanced beyond its infant state. To bring it to maturity, two things mainly are wanted. First, a greater variety of parts and ornaments than at present it seems pro-

\* See Chap. 15.

† See Chap. 8.

‡ "The citizen, who in his villa has but an acre for a garden, must have it diversified with every object that is suited to an extensive garden. There must be woods, streams, lawns, statues, and temples to every goddess as well as to Cloacina."

vided with. Gardening here has greatly the advantage: it is provided with plenty of materials for raising scenes without end, affecting the spectator with variety of emotions. In architecture, on the contrary, materials are so scanty, that artists hitherto have not been successful in raising any emotions but of beauty and grandeur: with respect to the former, there are indeed plenty of means, regularity, order, symmetry, simplicity, utility; and with respect to the latter, the addition of size is sufficient. But though it is evident, that every building ought to have a certain character or expression suited to its destination; yet this refinement has scarcely been attempted by any artist. A death's head and bones employed in monumental buildings, will indeed produce an emotion of gloom and melancholy; but such ornaments, if these can be termed so, ought to be rejected, because they are, in themselves, disagreeable. The other thing wanted to bring the art to perfection, is, to ascertain the precise impression made by every single part and ornament, cupolas, spires, columns, carvings, statues, vases, &c.: for in vain will an artist attempt rules for employing these, either singly or in combination, until the different emotions they produce be distinctly explained. Gardening in that particular also, has the advantage: the several emotions raised by trees, rivers, cascades, plains, eminences, and its other materials, are understood; and each emotion can be described with some degree of precision, which is attempted occasionally in the foregoing parts of this work.

In gardening as well as in architecture, simplicity ought to be a ruling principle. Profuse ornament has no better effect than to confound the eye, and to prevent the object from making an impression as one entire whole. An artist destitute of genius for capital beauties, is naturally prompted to supply the defect by crowding his plan with slight embellishments: hence in a garden, triumphal arches, Chinese houses, temples, obelisks, cascades, fountains, without end; and in a building, pillars, vases, statues, and a profusion of carved work. Thus some women defective in taste, are apt to overcharge every part of their dress with ornament. Superfluity of decoration has another bad effect: it gives the object a diminutive look: an island in a wide extended lake makes it appear larger; but an artificial lake, which is always little, appears still less by making an island in it.\*

In forming plans for embellishing a field, an artist without taste employs straight lines, circles, squares; because these look best upon paper. He perceives not, that to humor and adorn nature, is the perfection of his art; and that nature, neglecting regularity, distributes her objects in great variety with a bold hand. A large field laid out with strict regularity, is stiff and artificial.† *Natura indeo.* in organized bodies comprehended under one view studies regularity, which, for the same reason, ought to be studied in architec-

\* See Appendix to Part 5. Chap. 2.

† In France and Italy, a garden is disposed like the human body, alleys, like legs and arms, answering each other; the great walk in the middle representing the trunk of the body. Thus an artist void of taste carries self along into every operation/

ture: but in large objects, which cannot otherwise be surveyed but in parts and by succession, regularity and uniformity would be useless properties, because they cannot be discovered by the eye.\* Nature therefore, in her large works, neglects these properties; and in copying nature, the artist ought to neglect them.

Having thus far carried on a comparison between gardening and architecture; rules peculiar to each come next in order, beginning with gardening. The simplest plan of a garden, is that of a spot embellished with a number of natural objects, trees, walks, polished parterres, flowers, streams, &c. One more complex comprehends statues and buildings, that nature and art may be mutually ornamental. A third, approaching nearer perfection, is of objects assembled together in order to produce, not only an emotion of beauty, but also some other particular emotion, grandeur, for example, gayety, or any other above mentioned. The most complete plan of a garden is an improvement upon the third, requiring the several parts to be so arranged, as to inspire all the different emotions that can be raised by gardening. In this plan, the arrangement is an important circumstance; for it has been shown, that some emotions figure best in conjunction, and that others ought always to appear in succession, and never in conjunction. It is mentioned above,† that when the most opposite motions, such as gloominess and gayety, stillness and activity, follow each other in succession, the pleasure, on the whole, will be the greatest; but that such emotions ought not to be united, because they produce an unpleasant mixture.‡ For this reason, a ruin affording a sort of melancholy pleasure, ought not to be seen from a flower-parterre which is gay and cheerful.§ But to pass from an exhilarating object to a ruin, has a fine effect; for each of the emotions is the more sensibly felt by being contrasted with the other. Similar emotions, on the other hand, such as gayety and sweetness, stillness and gloominess, motion and grandeur, ought to be raised together; for their effects upon the mind are greatly heightened by their conjunction.

Kent's method of embellishing a field is admirable; which is to replenish it with beautiful objects, natural and artificial, disposed as they ought to be upon a canvass in painting. It requires indeed more genius to paint in the gardening way: in forming a landscape upon a canvass, no more is required than to adjust the figures to each other: an artist who would form a garden in Kent's manner, has an additional task; which is, to adjust his figures to the several varieties of the field.

A single garden must be distinguished from a plurality; and yet it is not obvious in what the unity of a garden consists. We have, indeed, some notion of unity in a garden surrounding a palace, with views from each window, and walks leading to every corner: but there may be a garden without a house; in which case, it is the

\* A square field appears not such to the eye when viewed from any part of it; and the centre is the only place where a circular field preserves in appearance its regular figure.

† Chap. 8.    ‡ Chap. 2. Part 4.    § See the place immediately above cited.

unity of design that makes it one garden; as where a spot of ground is so artfully dressed as to make the several portions appear to be parts of one whole. The gardens of Versailles, properly expressed in the plural number, being no fewer than sixteen, are indeed all of them connected with the palace, but have scarcely any mutual connection: they appear not like parts of one whole, but rather like small gardens in contiguity. A greater distance between these gardens would produce a better effect; their junction breeds confusion of ideas, and upon the whole gives less pleasure than would be felt in a slower succession.

Regularity is required in that part of a garden which is adjacent to the dwelling-house; because an immediate accessory ought to partake the regularity of the principal object;\* but in proportion to the distance from the house considered as the centre, regularity ought less and less to be studied; for in an extensive plan, it has a fine effect to lead the mind insensibly from regularity to a bold variety. Such arrangement tends to make an impression of grandeur: and grandeur ought to be studied as much as possible, even in a more confined plan, by avoiding a multiplicity of small parts.† A small garden, on the other hand, which admits not grandeur, ought to be strictly regular.

Milton, describing the garden of Eden, prefers justly grandeur before regularity:

Flowers worthy of paradise, which not nice art  
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon  
Pour'd forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain;  
Both where the morning-sun first warmly smote  
The open field, and where the unpierc'd shade  
Imbrown'd the noontide bow'rs. *Paradise Lost*, B. IV.

A hill covered with trees, appears more beautiful as well as more lofty than when naked. To distribute trees in a plain requires more art: near the dwelling-house they ought to be scattered so distant from each other, as not to break the unity of the field; and even at the greatest distance of distinct vision, they ought never to be so crowded as to hide any beautiful object.

In the manner of planting a wood or thicket, much art may be displayed. A common centre of walks, termed a *star*, from whence are seen remarkable objects, appears too artificial, and consequently

\* The influence of this connection surpassing all bounds, is still visible in many gardens, formed of horizontal plains forced with great labour and expence, perpendicular faces of earth supported by massy stone walls, terrace-walks in stages one above another, regular ponds and canals without the least motion, and the whole surrounded, like a prison, with high walls excluding every external object. At first view it may puzzle one to account for a taste so opposite to nature in every particular. But nothing happens without a cause. Perfect regularity and uniformity are required in a house; and this idea is extended to its accessory the garden, especially if it be a small spot incapable of grandeur or of much variety; the house is regular, so must the garden be; the floors of the house are horizontal, and the garden must have the same position; in the house we are protected from every intruding eye, so must we be in the garden. This, it must be confessed, is carrying the notion of resemblance very far: but where reason and taste are laid asleep, nothing is more common than to carry resemblance beyond proper bounds.

† See Chap. 4.

too stiff and formal, to be agreeable: the crowding withal of so many objects together, lessens the pleasure that would be felt in a slower succession. Abandoning, therefore, the star, let us try to substitute some form more natural, that will display all the remarkable objects in the neighborhood. This may be done by various apertures in the wood, purposely contrived to lay open successively every such object; sometimes a single object, sometimes a plurality in a line, and sometimes a rapid succession of them: the mind at intervals is roused and cheered by agreeable objects; and by surprise, upon viewing objects of which it had no expectation.

Attending to the influence of contrast, explained in the eighth chapter, we discover why the lowness of the ceiling increases in appearance the size of a large room, and why a long room appears still longer by being very narrow, as is remarkable in a gallery: by the same means, an object terminating a narrow opening in a wood, appears at a double distance. This suggests another rule for distributing trees in some quarter near the dwelling-house; which is to place a number of thickets in a line, with an opening in each, directing the eye from one to another; which will make them appear more distant from each other than they are in reality, and in appearance enlarge the size of the whole field. To give this plan its utmost effect, the space between the thickets ought to be considerable: and in order that each may be seen distinctly, the opening nearest the eye ought to be wider than the second, the second wider than the third, and so on to the end.\*

By a judicious distribution of trees, other beauties may be produced. A landscape so rich as to engross the whole attention, and so limited as sweetly to be comprehended under a single view, has a much finer effect than the most extensive landscape that requires a wandering of the eye through successive scenes. This observation suggests a capital rule in laying out a field; which is, never at any one station to admit a larger prospect than can easily be taken in at once. A field so happily situated as to command a great extent of prospect, is a delightful subject for applying this rule: let the prospect be split into proper parts by means of trees; studying at the same time to introduce all the variety possible. A plan of this kind executed with taste will produce a charming effect: the beautiful prospects are multiplied: each of them is much more agreeable than the entire prospect was originally: and, to crown the whole, the scenery is greatly diversified.

As gardening is not an inventive art, but an imitation of nature, or rather nature itself ornamented; it follows necessarily, that every thing unnatural ought to be rejected with disdain. Statues of wild beasts vomiting water, a common ornament in gardens, prevail in those of Versailles. Is that ornament in a good taste? A *jet d'eau*, being purely artificial, may, without disgust, be tortured into a thou-

\* An object will appear more distant than it really is, if different colored evergreens be planted between it and the eye. Suppose holly and laurel, and the holly which is of the deeper color, nearer the eye: the degradation of color in the laurel, makes it appear at a great distance from the holly, and consequently removes the object, in appearance, to a greater distance than it really is.



sand shapes: but a representation of what really exists in nature, admits not any unnatural circumstance. In the statues of Versailles the artist has displayed his vicious taste without the least color or disguise. A lifeless statue of an animal pouring out water, may be endured without much disgust: but here the lions and wolves are put in violent action, each has seized its prey, a deer or a lamb, in act to devour; and yet, as by hocus-pocus, the whole is converted into a different scene: the lion, forgetting his prey, pours out water plentifully; and the deer, forgetting its danger, performs the same work: a representation no less absurd than that in the opera, where Alexander the Great, after mounting the wall of a town besieged, turns his back to the enemy, and entertains his army with a song.\*

In gardening, every lively exhibition of what is beautiful in nature has a fine effect: on the other hand, distant and faint imitations are displeasing to every one of taste. The cutting of evergreens in the shape of animals, is very ancient; as appears from the epistles of Pliny, who seems to be a great admirer of the conceit. The propensity to imitation gave birth to that practice; and has supported it wonderfully long, considering how faint and insipid the imitation is. But the vulgar, great and small, are entertained with the oddness and singularity of a resemblance, however distant, between a tree and an animal. An attempt in the gardens of Versailles to imitate a grove of trees by a group of *jets d'eau*, appears, for the same reason, no less childish.

In designing a garden, every thing trivial or whimsical ought to be avoided. Is a labyrinth then to be justified? It is a mere conceit, like that of composing verses in the shape of an axe or an egg: the walks and hedges may be agreeable; but in the form of a labyrinth, they serve to no end but to puzzle: a riddle is a conceit not so mean; because the solution is proof of sagacity, which affords no aid in tracing a labyrinth.

The gardens of Versailles, executed with boundless expense by the best artists of that age, are a lasting monument of a taste the most depraved: the faults above mentioned, instead of being avoided, are chosen as beauties, and multiplied without end. Nature, it would seem, was deemed too vulgar to be imitated in the works of a magnificent monarch: and for that reason preference was given to things unnatural, which probably were mistaken for supernatural. I have often amused myself with a fanciful resemblance between these gardens and the Arabian tales: each of them is a performance intended for the amusement of a great king: in the sixteen gardens of Versailles there is no unity of design, more than in the thousand and one Arabian tales: and, lastly, they are equally unnatural; groves of *jets d'eau*, statues of animals conversing in the manner of Æsop, water issuing out of the mouths of wild beasts, give an im-

\* Ulloa, a Spanish writer, describing the city of Lima, says, that the great square is finely ornamented. "In the centre is a fountain, equally remarkable for its grandeur and capacity. Raised above the fountain is a bronze statue of Fame, and four small basins on the angles. The water issues from the trumpet of the statue, and from the mouths of eight lions surrounding it, which" in his opinion "greatly heighten the beauty of the whole."



pression of fairy-land and witchcraft, no less than diamond-palaces, invisible rings, spells and incantations.

A straight road is the most agreeable, because it shortens the journey. But in an embellished field, a straight walk has an air of formality and confinement: and at any rate is less agreeable than a winding or waving walk; for in surveying the beauties of an ornamented field, we love to roam from place to place at freedom. Winding walks have another advantage: at every step they open new views. In short, the walks in pleasure-grounds ought not to have any appearance of a road: my intention is not to make a journey, but to feast my eye on the beauties of art and nature. This rule excludes not openings directing the eye to distant objects. Such openings, beside variety, are agreeable in various respects: first, as observed above, they extend in appearance the size of the field: next, an object, at whatever distance, continues the opening, and deludes the spectator into a conviction, that the trees which confine the view are continued till they join the object. Straight walks in recesses do well; they vary the scenery, and are favorable to meditation.

Avoid a straight avenue directed upon a dwelling-house: better far an oblique approach in a waving line, with single trees and other scattered objects interposed. In a direct approach, the first appearance is continued to the end: we see a house at a distance, and we see it all along in the same spot without any variety. In an oblique approach, the interposed objects put the house seemingly in motion: it moves with the passenger, and appears to direct its course so as hospitably to intercept him. An oblique approach contributes also to variety: the house, seen successively in different directions, assumes at each step a new figure.

A garden on a flat ought to be highly and variously ornamented, in order to occupy the mind, and prevent our regretting the insipidity of an uniform plain. Artificial mounts in that view are common: but no person has thought of an artificial walk elevated high above the plain. Such a walk is airy, and tends to elevate the mind: it extends and varies the prospect; and it makes the plain, seen from a height, appear more agreeable.

Whether should a ruin be in the Gothic or Grecian form? In the former, I think; because it exhibits the triumph of time over strength; a melancholy, but not unpleasant thought: a Grecian ruin suggests rather the triumph of barbarity over taste; a gloomy and discouraging thought.

There are not many fountains in a good taste. Statues of animals vomiting water, which prevail every where, stand condemned as unnatural. A statue of a whale spouting water upward from its head is in one sense natural, as certain whales have that power; but it is a sufficient objection, that its singularity would make it appear unnatural; there is another reason against it, that the figure of a whale is in itself not agreeable. In many Roman fountains, statues of fishes are employed to support a large bason of water. This unnatural conceit is not accountable, unless from the connection that water has with the fish that swim in it; which by the way

shows the influence of even the slightest relations. The best design for a fountain I have met with, is what follows. In an artificial rock, rugged and abrupt, there is a cavity out of sight at the top: the water, conveyed to it by a pipe, pours or trickles down the broken parts of the rock, and is collected into a bason at the foot: it is so contrived, as to make the water fall in sheets or in rills at pleasure.

Hitherto a garden has been treated as a work intended solely for pleasure, or, in other words, for giving impressions of intrinsic beauty. What comes next in order, is the beauty of a garden destined for use, termed *relative beauty*;<sup>\*</sup> and this branch shall be dispatched in a few words. In gardening, luckily, relative beauty need never stand in opposition to intrinsic beauty: all the ground that can be requisite for use, makes but a small proportion of an ornamented field; and may be put in any corner without obstructing the disposition of the capital parts. At the same time, a kitchen-garden or an orchard is susceptible of intrinsic beauty; and may be so artfully disposed among the other parts, as by variety and contrast to contribute to the beauty of the whole. In this respect, architecture requires a greater stretch of art, as will be seen immediately; for as intrinsic and relative beauty must often be blended in the same building, it becomes a difficult task to attain both in any perfection.

In a hot country it is a capital object to have what may be termed a *summer-garden*; that is, a spot of ground disposed by art and by nature to exclude the sun, but to give free access to the air. In a cold country, the capital object should be a *winter-garden*, open to the sun, sheltered from wind, dry under foot, and taking on the appearance of summer by variety of evergreens. The relish of a country life, totally extinct in France, is decaying fast in Britain. But as still many people of fashion, and some of taste, pass the winter, or part of it, in the country, it is amazing that winter-gardens should be overlooked. During summer, every field is a garden; but during half of the year, the weather is seldom so good in Britain as to afford comfort in the open air without shelter; and yet seldom so bad as not to afford comfort with shelter. I say more, that beside providing for exercise and health, a winter-garden may be made subservient to education, by introducing a habit of thinking. In youth, lively spirits give too great a propensity to pleasure and amusement, making us averse to serious occupation. That untoward bias may be corrected in some degree by a winter-garden, which produces in the mind a calm satisfaction, free from agitation of passion, whether gay or gloomy; a fine tone of mind for meditation and reasoning.<sup>†</sup>

\* See these terms defined, Chap. 3.

† A correspondent, whose name I hitherto have concealed, that I might not be thought vain, and which I can no longer conceal,<sup>\*</sup> writes to me as follows: "In life we generally lay our account with prosperity, and seldom, very seldom prepare for adversity. We carry that propensity even into the structure of our gardens: we cultivate the gay ornaments of summer, relishing no plants but what flourish by mild dews and gracious sunshine: we banish from our thoughts

\* Mrs. Montagu.

Gardening being in China brought to greater perfection than in any other known country, we shall close our present subject with a slight view of Chinese gardens, which are found entirely obsequious to the principles that govern every one of the fine arts. In general, it is an indispensable law there, never to deviate from nature: but in order to produce that degree of variety which is pleasing, every method consistent with nature is put in practice. Nature is strictly imitated in the banks of their artificial lakes and rivers; which sometimes are bare and gravelly, sometimes covered with wood quite to the brink of the water. To flat spots adorned with flowers and shrubs, are opposed others steep and rocky. We see meadows covered with cattle; rice-grounds that run into lakes; groves into which enter navigable creeks and rivulets: these generally conduct to some interesting object, a magnificent building, terraces cut in a mountain, a cascade, a grotto, an artificial rock. Their artificial rivers are generally serpentine; sometimes narrow, noisy, and rapid; sometimes deep, broad, and slow: and to make the scene still more active, mills and other moving machines are often erected. In the lakes are interspersed islands; some barren, surrounded with rocks and shoals; others enriched with every thing that art and nature can furnish. Even in their cascades they avoid regularity, as forcing nature out of its course: the waters are seen bursting from the caverns and windings of the artificial rocks, here a roaring cataract, there many gentle falls; and the stream often impeded by trees and stones, that seem brought down by the violence of the current. Straight lines are sometimes indulged, in order to keep in view some interesting object at a distance.

Sensible of the influence of contrast, the Chinese artists deal in sudden transitions, and in opposing to each other, forms, colors, and shades. The eye is conducted, from limited to extensive views, and from lakes and rivers to plains, hills, and woods: to dark and gloomy colors, are opposed the more brilliant: the different masses of light and shade are disposed in such a manner, as to render the composition distinct in its parts, and striking on the whole. In plantations, the trees are artfully mixed according to their shape and color; those of spreading branches with the pyramidal, and the light green with the deep green. They even introduce decayed trees, some erect, and some half out of the ground.\* In order to heighten contrast, much bolder strokes are risked: they sometimes introduce rough rocks, dark caverns, trees ill formed, and seemingly rent by tempests, or blasted by lightning; a building in ruins, or half consumed by fire. But to relieve the mind from the harshness ghastly winter, when the benign influences of the sun cheering us no more, are doubly regretted by yielding to the piercing north wind and nipping frost. Sage is the gardener, in the metaphorical as well as literal sense, who procures a friendly shelter to protect us from December storms, and cultivates the plants that adorn and enliven that dreary season. He is no philosopher who cannot retire into the Stoic's walk, when the gardens of Epicurus are out of bloom: he is too much a philosopher who will rigidly proscribe the flowers and aromatics of summer, to sit constantly under the cypress-shade."

\* Taste has suggested to Kent the same artifice. A decayed tree placed properly, contributes to contrast; and also in a pensive or sedate state of mind produces a sort of pity, grounded on an imaginary personification.

of such objects, the sweetest and most beautiful scenes always succeed.

The Chinese study to give play to the imagination: they hide the termination of their lakes; and commonly interrupt the view of a cascade by trees, through which are seen obscurely the waters as they fall. The imagination once roused, is disposed to magnify every object.

Nothing is more studied in Chinese gardens than to raise wonder or surprise. In scenes calculated for that end, every thing appears like fairy-land; a torrent, for example, conveyed under ground, puzzles a stranger by its uncommon sound to guess what it may be; and to multiply such uncommon sounds, the rocks and buildings are contrived with cavities and interstices. Sometimes one is led insensibly into a dark cavern, terminating unexpectedly in a landscape enriched with all that nature affords the most delicious. At other times, beautiful walks insensibly conduct to a rough uncultivated field, where bushes, briars, and stones interrupt the passage: looking about for an outlet, some rich prospect unexpectedly opens to view. Another artifice is, to obscure some capital part by trees, or other interposed objects: our curiosity is raised to know what lies beyond; and after a few steps, we are greatly surprised with some scene totally different from what was expected.

These cursory observations upon gardening, shall be closed with some reflections that must touch every reader. Rough uncultivated ground, dismal to the eye, inspires peevishness and discontent. May not this be one cause of the harsh manners of savages? A field richly ornamented, containing beautiful objects of various kinds, displays in full lustre the goodness of the Deity, and the ample provision he has made for our happiness. Ought not the spectator to be filled with gratitude to his Maker, and with benevolence to his fellow-creatures? Other fine arts may be perverted to excite irregular, and even vicious, emotions: but gardening, which inspires the purest and most refined pleasures, cannot fail to promote every good affection. The gayety and harmony of mind it produces, inclining the spectator to communicate his satisfaction to others, and to make them happy as he is himself, tend naturally to establish in him a habit of humanity and benevolence.\*

It is not easy to suppress a degree of enthusiasm, when we reflect on the advantages of gardening with respect to virtuous education. In the beginning of life the deepest impressions are made; and it is a sad truth, that the young student, familiarized to the dirtiness and disorder of many colleges pent within narrow bounds in populous cities, is rendered in a measure insensible to the elegant beauties of art and nature. Is there no man of fortune sufficiently patriotic to think of reforming this evil? It seems to me far from an exaggeration, that good professors are not more essential to a college, than a

\* The manufactures of silk, flax, and cotton, in their present advance towards perfection, may be held as inferior branches of the fine arts; because their productions in dress and in furniture inspire, like them, gay and kindly emotions favorable to morality.

spacious garden sweetly ornamented, but without any thing glaring or fantastic, so as upon the whole to inspire our youth with a taste no less for simplicity than for elegance. In that respect, the university of Oxford may justly be deemed a model.

Having finished what occurred on gardening, I proceed to rules and observations that more peculiarly concern architecture. Architecture, being a useful as well as a fine art, leads us to distinguish buildings and parts of buildings into three kinds; namely, what are intended for utility solely, what for ornament solely, and what for both. Buildings intended for utility solely, such as detached offices, ought, in every part, to correspond precisely to that intention; the slightest deviation from the end in view will by every person of taste be thought a blemish. In general, it is the perfection of every work of art, that it fulfils the purpose for which it is intended; and every other beauty, in opposition, is improper. But in things intended for ornament, such as pillars, obelisks, triumphal arches, beauty alone ought to be regarded. A Heathen temple must be considered as merely ornamental; for being dedicated to some deity, and not intended for habitation, it is susceptible of any figure and any embellishment that fancy can suggest and beauty admit. The great difficulty of contrivance, respects buildings that are intended to be useful as well as ornamental. These ends, employing different and often opposite means, are seldom united in perfection; and the only practicable method in such buildings is, to favor ornament less or more according to the character of the building: in palaces, and other edifices sufficiently extensive to admit a variety of useful contrivance, regularity justly takes the lead; but in dwelling-houses that are too small for variety of contrivance, utility ought to prevail, neglecting regularity as far as it stands in opposition to convenience.\*

Intrinsic and relative beauty being founded on different principles, must be handled separately. I begin with relative beauty, as it is of the greater importance.

The proportions of a door are determined by the use to which it is destined. The door of a dwelling-house, which ought to correspond to the human size, is confined to seven or eight feet in height, and three or four in breadth. The proportions proper for the door of a barn or coach-house, are widely different. Another consideration enters. To study intrinsic beauty in a coach-house or barn, intended merely for use, is obviously improper. But a dwelling-house may admit ornaments; and the principal door of a palace demands all the grandeur that is consistent with the foregoing proportions dictated by utility: it ought to be elevated, and approached by steps; and it may be adorned with pillars supporting an architrave, or in any other beautiful manner. The door of a church ought to be wide, in order to afford an easy passage for a multitude: the width, at the same time, regulates the height, as will appear hereafter. The size of windows ought to be proportioned to that of

\* A building must be large to produce any sensible emotion of regularity, proportion, or beauty; which is an additional reason for minding convenience only in a dwelling-house of small size.

the room they illuminate; for if the apertures be not sufficiently large to convey light to every corner, the room is unequally lighted, which is a great deformity. The steps of a stair ought to be accommodated to the human figure, without regarding any other proportion: they are accordingly the same in large and in small buildings, because both are inhabited by men of the same size.

I proceed to consider intrinsic beauty blended with that which is relative. Though a cube in itself is more agreeable than a parallelopipedon, yet a large parallelopipedon set on its smaller base, is by its elevation more agreeable; and hence the beauty of a Gothic tower. But supposing this figure to be destined for a dwelling-house, to make way for relative beauty, we immediately perceive that utility ought chiefly to be regarded, and that the figure, inconvenient by its height, ought to be set upon its larger base: the loftiness is gone; but, that loss is more than compensated by additional convenience; for which reason, a figure spread more upon the ground than raised in height, is always preferred for a dwelling-house, without excepting even the most superb palace.

As to the divisions within, utility requires that the rooms be rectangular; for otherwise void spaces will be left, which are of no use. A hexagonal figure leaves no void spaces; but it determines the rooms to be all of one size, which is inconvenient. A room of a moderate size may be a square; but in very large rooms this figure must, for the most part, give place to a parallelogram, which can more easily be adjusted, than a square, to the smaller rooms contrived entirely for convenience. A parallelogram, at the same time, is the best calculated for receiving light; because, to avoid cross lights, all the windows ought to be in one wall; and the opposite wall must be so near as to be fully lighted, otherwise the room will be obscure. The height of a room exceeding nine or ten feet, has little or no relation to utility; and therefore proportion is the only rule for determining a greater height.

As all artists who love what is beautiful, are prone to entertain the eye, they have opportunity to exert their taste upon palaces and sumptuous buildings, where, as above observed, intrinsic beauty ought to have the ascendant over that which is relative. But such propensity is unhappy with respect to dwelling-houses of moderate size; because in these, intrinsic beauty cannot be displayed in any perfection, without wounding relative beauty: a small house admits not much variety of form; and in such houses there is no instance of internal convenience being accurately adjusted to external regularity: I am apt to believe that it is beyond the reach of art. And yet architects never give over attempting to reconcile these two incompatibles. How otherwise should it happen, that of the endless variety of private dwelling-houses, there is scarcely an instance of any one being chosen for a pattern? The unwearied propensity to make a house regular as well as convenient, forces the architect, in some articles, to sacrifice convenience to regularity, and in others, regularity to convenience; and the house, which turns out neither regular nor convenient, never fails to displease: the faults are



obvious; and the difficulty of doing better is known to the artist only.\*

Nothing can be more evident, than that the form of a dwelling-house ought to be suited to the climate: and yet no error is more common, than to copy in Britain the form of Italian houses; not forgetting even those parts that are purposely contrived for air, and for excluding the-sun. I shall give one or two instances. A colonnade along the front of a building, has a fine effect in Greece and Italy, by producing coolness and obscurity—agreeable properties in warm and luminous climates: but the cold climate of Britain is altogether averse to that ornament; and therefore a colonnade can never be proper in this country, unless for a portico, or to communicate with a detached building. Again, a logio laying the house open to the north, contrived in Italy for gathering cool air, is, if possible, still more improper for this climate: scarcely endurable in summer, it, in winter, exposes the house to the bitter blasts of the north, and to every shower of snow and rain.

Having said what appeared necessary upon relative beauty, the next step is, to view architecture as one of the fine arts; which will lead us to the examination of such buildings, and parts of buildings, as are calculated solely to please the eye. In the works of Nature, rich and magnificent, variety prevails; and in works of Art that are contrived to imitate Nature, the great art is to hide every appearance of art; which is done by avoiding regularity, and indulging variety. But in works of art that are original, and not imitative, the timid hand is guided by rule and compass; and accordingly, in architecture strict regularity and uniformity are studied, as far as consistent with utility.

Proportion is no less agreeable than regularity and uniformity; and therefore in buildings intended to please the eye, they are all equally essential. By many writers it is taken for granted, that in buildings there are certain proportions that please the eye, as in sounds there are certain proportions that please the ear; and that in both equally the slightest deviation from the precise proportion is disagreeable. Others seem to relish more a comparison between proportion in numbers and proportion in quantity; and hold that the same proportions are agreeable in both. The proportions, for example, of the numbers 16, 24, and 36, are agreeable; and so, say they, are the proportions of a room, the height of which is 16 feet, the breadth 24, and the length 36. May I hope from the reader, that he will patiently accompany me in examining this point, which is useful as well as curious. To refute the notion of a resemblance between musical proportions and those of architecture, it might be sufficient to observe in general, that the one is addressed to the ear, the other to the eye; and that objects of different senses have no resemblance, nor indeed any relation to each other. But more particularly, what pleases the ear in harmony, is not proportion among the strings of the instrument, but among the sounds that these strings

\* "Houses are built to live in, and not to look on; therefore let use be preferred before uniformity, except where both may be had." *Lord Verulam, Essay 45.*



produce. In architecture, on the contrary, it is the proportion of different quantities that please the eye, without the least relation to sound. Were quantity to be the ground of comparison, we have no reason to presume, that there is any natural analogy between the proportions that please in a building, and the proportions of strings that produce concordant sounds. Let us take for example an octave, produced by two similar strings, the one double of the other in length. This is the most perfect of all concords; and yet I know not that the proportion of one to two is agreeable in any two parts of a building. I add, that concordant notes are produced by wind-instruments, which, as to proportion, appear not to have even the slightest resemblance to a building.

With respect to the other notion, namely, a comparison between proportion in numbers and proportion in quantity; I urge, that number and quantity are so different, as to afford no probability of any natural relation between them. Quantity is a real quality of every body; number is not a real quality, but merely an idea that arises upon viewing a plurality of things, whether conjunctly or in succession. An arithmetical proportion is agreeable in numbers; but have we any reason to infer that it must also be agreeable in quantity? At that rate, a geometrical proportion, and many others which are agreeable in numbers, ought also to be agreeable in quantity. In an endless variety of proportions, it would be wonderful, if there never should happen a coincidence of any one agreeable proportion in both. One example is given in the numbers 16, 24, and 36; but to be convinced that this agreeable coincidence is merely accidental, we need only reflect, that the same proportions are not applicable to the external figure of a house, and far less to a column.

That we are framed by nature to relish proportion as well as regularity, is indisputable; but that agreeable proportion should, like concord in sounds, be confined to certain precise measures, is not warranted by experience. On the contrary, we learn from experience, that proportion admits more and less; that several proportions are each of them agreeable; and that we are not sensible of disproportion, till the difference between the quantities compared become the most striking circumstance. Columns evidently admit different proportions, equally agreeable; and so do houses, rooms, and other parts of a building. This leads to an interesting reflection: the foregoing difference between concord and proportion, is an additional instance of that admirable harmony which subsists among the several branches of the human frame. The ear is an accurate judge of sounds, and of their smallest differences; and that concord in sounds should be regulated by accurate measures, is perfectly well suited to this accuracy of perception. The eye is more uncertain about the size of a large object, than of one that is small; and at a distance an object appears less than at hand. Delicacy of perception, therefore, with respect to proportion in quantities, would be an useless quality; and it is much better ordered, that there should be such a latitude with respect to agreeable proportions, as to correspond to the uncertainty of the eye with respect to quantity.

But all the beauties of this subject are not yet displayed ; and it is too interesting to be passed over in a cursory view. I proceed to observe, that to make the eye as delicate with respect to proportion as the ear is with respect to concord, would not only be an useless quality, but be the source of continual pain and uneasiness. I need go no farther for a proof than the very room I occupy at present : for every step I take varies to me, in appearance, the proportion of length to breadth : at that rate, I should not be happy but in one precise spot, where the proportion appears agreeable. Let me farther observe, that it would be singular indeed to find, in the nature of man, any two principles in perpetual opposition to each other : and yet this would be the case, if proportion were circumscribed like concord ; for it would exclude all but one of those proportions that utility requires in different buildings, and in different parts of the same building.

It provokes a smile to find writers acknowledging the necessity of accurate proportions, and yet differing widely about them. Laying aside reasoning and philosophy, one fact, universally allowed, ought to have undeceived them, that the same proportions which are agreeable in a model, are not agreeable in a large building : a room 40 feet in length and 24 in breadth and height, is well proportioned ; but a room 12 feet wide and high and 24 long, approaches to a gallery.

Perault, in his comparison of the ancients and moderns,\* is the only author who runs to the opposite extreme ; maintaining, that the different proportions assigned to each order of columns are arbitrary, and that the beauty of these proportions is entirely the effect of custom. This betrays ignorance of human nature, which evidently delights in proportion as well as in regularity, order, and propriety. But without any acquaintance with human nature, a single reflection might have convinced him of his error—that if these proportions had not originally been agreeable, they could not have been established by custom.

To illustrate the present point, I shall add a few examples of the agreeableness of different proportions. In a sumptuous edifice, the capital rooms ought to be large, for otherwise they will not be proportioned to the size of the building : and for the same reason, a very large room is improper in a small house. But in things thus related, the mind requires not a precise or single proportion, rejecting all others ; on the contrary, many different proportions are made equally welcome. In all buildings, accordingly, we find rooms of different proportions equally agreeable, even where the proportion is not influenced by utility. With respect to the height of a room, the proportion it ought to bear to the length and breadth, is arbitrary ; and it cannot be otherwise, considering the uncertainty of the eye as to the height of a room, when it exceeds seventeen or eighteen feet. In columns again, even architects must confess, that the proportion of height and thickness varies betwixt eight diameters and ten, and that every proportion between these extremes is agreeable. But

this is not all. There must certainly be a farther variation of proportion, depending on the size of the column; a row of columns ten feet high, and a row twice that height, require different proportions: the intercolumniations must also differ according to the height of the row.

Proportion of parts is not only itself a beauty, but is inseparably connected with a beauty of the highest relish, that of concord or harmony; which will be plain from what follows. A room of which the parts are all finely adjusted to each other, strikes us with the beauty of proportion. It strikes us at the same time with a pleasure far superior: the length, the breadth, the height, the windows, raise each of them separately an emotion: these emotions are similar; and though faint when felt separately, they produce in conjunction the emotion of concord or harmony, which is extremely pleasant.\* On the other hand, where the length of a room far exceeds the breadth, the mind, comparing together parts so intimately connected, immediately perceives a disagreement or disproportion which disgusts. But this is not all; viewing them separately, different emotions are produced, that of grandeur from the great length, and that of meanness or littleness from the small breadth, which in union are disagreeable by their discordance. Hence it is, that a long gallery, however convenient for exercise, is not an agreeable figure of a room: we consider it, like a stable, as destined for use, and expect not that in any other respect it should be agreeable.†

Regularity and proportion are essential in buildings destined chiefly or solely to please the eye, because they produce intrinsic beauty. But a skilful artist will not confine his view to regularity and proportion: he will also study congruity, which is perceived when the form and ornaments of a structure are suited to the purpose for which it is intended. The sense of congruity dictates the following rule—that every building have an expression corresponding to its destination: a palace ought to be sumptuous and grand; a private dwelling, neat and modest; a play-house, gay and splendid; and a monument, gloomy and melancholy.‡ A heathen temple has a double destination: It is considered chiefly as a house dedicated to some divinity; and in that respect it ought to be grand, elevated, and magnificent: it is considered also as a place of worship; and in that respect it ought to be somewhat dark or gloomy, because dimness produces that tone of mind which is suited to humility and devotion.

\* Chap. 2. Part 4.

† A covered passage connecting a winter garden with the dwelling house, would answer the purpose of walking in bad weather much better than a gallery. A slight roof supported by slender pillars, whether of wood or stone, would be sufficient; filling up the spaces between the pillars with evergreens, so as to give verdure and exclude wind.

‡ A house for the poor ought to have an appearance suited to its destination. The new hospital in Paris for foundlings, errs against this rule; for it has more the air of a palace than of an hospital. Propriety and convenience ought to be studied in lodging the indigent; but in such houses splendor and magnificence are out of all rule. For the same reason, a naked statue or picture, scarce decent any where, is in a church intolerable. A sumptuous charity school, beside its impropriety, gives the children an unhappy taste for high living.

A Christian church is not considered to be a house for the Deity, but merely a place of worship: it ought therefore to be decent and plain, without much ornament: a situation ought to be chosen low and retired; because the congregation during worship, ought to be humble and disengaged from the world. Columns, beside their chief service of being supports, may contribute to that peculiar expression which the destination of a building requires: columns of different proportions, serve to express loftiness, lightness, &c. as well as strength. Situation also may contribute to expression. Conveniency regulates the situation of a private dwelling-house; but, as I have had occasion to observe,\* the situation of a palace ought to be lofty.

And this leads to a question, whether the situation, where there happens to be no choice, ought, in any measure, to regulate the form of the edifice? The connection between a large house and the neighboring fields, though not intimate, demands however some congruity. It would, for example, displease us to find an elegant building thrown away upon a wild uncultivated country: congruity requires a polished field for such a building; and beside the pleasure of congruity, the spectator is sensible of the pleasure of concordance from the similarity of the emotions produced by the two objects. The old Gothic form of building, seems well suited to the rough uncultivated regions where it was invented: the only mistake was, the transferring this form to the fine plains of France and Italy, better fitted for buildings in the Grecian taste; but by refining upon the Gothic form, every thing possible has been done to reconcile it to its new situation. The profuse variety of wild and grand objects about Inverary, demanded a house in the Gothic form; and every one must approve the taste of the proprietor, in adjusting so finely the appearance of his house to that of the country where it is placed.

The external structure of a great house, leads naturally to its internal structure. A spacious room, which is the first that commonly receives us, seems a bad contrivance in several respects. In the first place, when immediately from the open air we step into such a room, its size in appearance is diminished by contrast: it looks little compared with that great canopy the sky. In the next place, when it recovers its grandeur, as it soon does, it gives a diminutive appearance to the rest of the house: passing from it, every apartment looks little. This room therefore may be aptly compared to the swollen commencement of an epic poem.

*Bella per Emathios plusquam civilia campos.*

In the third place, by its situation it serves only for a waiting-room, and a passage to the principal apartments; instead of being reserved as it ought to be, for entertaining company: a great room, which enlarges the mind, and gives a certain elevation to the spirits, is destined by nature for conversation. Rejecting therefore this form, I take a hint from the climax in writing for another form that appears more suitable. A handsome portico, proportioned to the size and

fashion of the front, leads into a waiting-room of a larger size, and that to the great room; all by a progression from small to great. If the house be very large, there may be space for the following suit of rooms: first, a portico; second, a passage within the house, bounded by a double row of columns connected by arcades; third, an octagon room, or of any other figure, about the centre of the building; and, lastly, the great room.

A double row of windows must be disagreeable, by distributing the light unequally: the space in particular between the rows is always gloomy. For that reason, a room of greater height than can be conveniently served by a single row, ought regularly to be lighted from the roof. Artists have generally an inclination to form the great room into a double cube, even with the inconvenience of a double row of windows: they are pleased with the regularity, overlooking that it is mental only, and not visible to the eye, which seldom can distinguish between the height of 24 feet and that of 30.\*

Of all the emotions that can be raised by architecture, grandeur is that which has the greatest influence on the mind; and it ought therefore, to be the chief study of the artist, to raise this emotion in great buildings destined to please the eye. But as grandeur depends partly on size, it seems so far unlucky for architecture, that it is governed by regularity and proportion, which never deceive the eye by making objects appear larger than they are in reality: such deception, as above observed, is never found but with some remarkable disproportion of parts. But though regularity and proportion contribute nothing to grandeur as far as that emotion depends on size, they in a different respect contribute greatly to it, as has been explained above.†

Next of ornaments, which contribute to give buildings a peculiar expression. It has been doubted whether a building can regularly admit any ornament but what is useful, or at least has that appearance. But considering the different purposes of architecture, a fine as well as a useful art, there is no good reason why ornaments may not be added to please the eye without any relation to use. This liberty is allowed in poetry, painting, and gardening, and why not in architecture considered as a fine art? A private dwelling-house, it is true, and other edifices where use is the chief aim, admit not regularly any ornament but what has the appearance, at least, of use: but temples, triumphal arches, and other buildings, intended chiefly or solely for show, admit every sort of ornament.

A thing intended merely as an ornament, may be of any figure and of any kind that fancy can suggest; if it please the spectator, the artist gains his end. Statues, vases, sculpture upon stone, whether basso or alto relievo, are beautiful ornaments relished in all civilized countries. The placing of such ornaments so as to pro-

\* One who has not given peculiar attention, will scarce imagine how imperfect our judgment is about distances, without experience. Our looks being generally directed to objects upon the ground around us, we judge tolerably of horizontal distances: but seldom having occasion to look upward in a perpendicular line, we scarce can form any judgment of distances in that direction.

† Chap. 4.

duce the best effect, is the only nicety. A statue in perfection is an enchanting work ; and we naturally require that it should be seen in every direction and at different distances ; for which reason, statues employed as ornaments are proper to adorn the great staircase that leads to the principal door of a palace, or to occupy the void between pillars. But a niche in the external front is not a proper place for a statue : and statues upon the roof, or upon the top of a wall, would give pain by seeming to be in danger of tumbling. To adorn the top of a wall with a row of vases is an unhappy conceit, by placing things apparently of use where they cannot be of any use. As to basso and alto relievo, I observe, that in architecture as well as in gardening, contradictory expressions ought to be avoided : for which reason, the lightness and delicacy of carved work ill suits the firmness and solidity of a pedestal : upon the pedestal, whether of a statue or a column, the ancients never ventured any bolder ornament than the basso relievo.

One at first view will naturally take it for granted, that in the ornaments under consideration beauty is indispensable. It goes a great way undoubtedly ; but, upon trial, we find many things esteemed as highly ornamental that have little or no beauty. There are various circumstances, beside beauty, that tend to make an agreeable impression. For instance, the reverence we have for the ancients is a fruitful source of ornaments. Amalthea's horn has always been a favorite ornament, because of its connection with a lady who was honored with the care of Jupiter in his infancy. A fat old fellow and a goat are surely not graceful forms ; and yet Selinus and his companions are every where fashionable ornaments. What else but our fondness for antiquity can make the horrid form of a Sphinx so much as endurable ? Original destination is another circumstance that has influence to add dignity to things in themselves abundantly trivial. In the sculpture of a marble chimney-piece, instruments of a Grecian or Roman sacrifice are beheld with pleasure ; original destination rendering them venerable as well as their antiquity. Let some modern cutlery ware be substituted, though not less beautiful ; the artist will be thought whimsical, if not absurd. Triumphal arches, pyramids, obelisks, are beautiful forms ; but the nobleness of their original destination has greatly enhanced the pleasure we take in them. A statue, supposed to be an Apollo, will with an antiquary lose much of its grace when discovered to have been done for a barber's apprentice. Long robes appear noble, not singly for their flowing lines, but for their being the habit of magistrates ; and a scarf acquires an air of dignity by being the badge of a superior order of churchmen. These examples may be thought sufficient for a specimen : a diligent inquiry into human nature will discover other influencing principles ; and hence it is, that of all subjects ornaments admit the greatest variety in point of taste.

Things merely ornamental appear more gay and showy than things that take on the appearance of use. A knot of diamonds in the hair is splendid ; but diamonds have a more modest appearance



when used as clasps or buttons. The former are more proper for a young beauty, the latter after marriage.

And this leads to ornaments having relation to use. Ornaments of that kind are governed by a different principle, which is, that they ought to be of a form suited to their real or apparent destination. This rule is applicable as well to ornaments that make a component part of the subject, as to ornaments that are only accessory. With relation to the former, it never can proceed from a good taste to make a tea-spoon resemble the leaf of a tree; for such a form is inconsistent with the destination of a tea-spoon. An eagle's paw is an ornament no less improper for the foot of a chair or table: because it gives it the appearance of weakness, inconsistent with its destination of bearing weight. Blind windows are sometimes introduced to preserve the appearance of regularity: in which case the deceit ought carefully to be concealed. If visible, it marks the irregularity in the clearest manner, signifying, that real windows ought to have been there, could they have been made consistent with the internal structure. A pilaster is another example of the same sort of ornament; and the greatest error against its seeming destination of a support, is to sink it so far into the wall as to make it lose that seeming. A composition representing leaves and branches, with birds perching upon them, has been long in fashion for a candlestick; but none of these particulars is in any degree suited to that destination.

A large marble bason supported by fishes, is a conceit much relished in fountains. This is an example of accessory ornaments in a bad taste; for fishes here are unsuitable to their apparent destination. No less so are the supports of a coach, carved in the figure of Dolphins or Tritons: for what have these marine beings to do on dry land? and what support can they be to a coach.

In a column we have an example of both kinds of ornament. Where columns are employed in the front of a building to support an entablature, they belong to the first kind: where employed to connect with detached offices, they are rather of the other kind. As a column is a capital ornament in Grecian architecture, it well deserves to be handled at large.

With respect to the form of this ornament, I observe that a circle is a more agreeable figure than a square, a globe than a cube, and a cylinder than a parallelopipedon. This last, in the language of architecture, is saying that a column is a more agreeable figure than a pilaster; and for that reason, it ought to be preferred, all other circumstances being equal. Another reason concurs, that a column connected with a wall, which is a plain surface, makes a greater variety than a pilaster. There is an additional reason for rejecting pilasters in the external front of a building, arising from a principle unfolded above,\* namely, a tendency in man, to advance every thing to its perfection, and to its conclusion. If, for example, I see a thing obscurely in a dim light and by disjointed parts, the tendency prompts me to connect the disjointed parts into a whole.

\* Chap. 4.



I supposed it to be, for example, a horse; and my eyesight being obedient to the conjecture, I immediately perceive a horse, almost as distinctly as in daylight. This principle is applicable to the case in hand. The most superb front, at a great distance, appears a plain surface: approaching gradually, we begin first to perceive inequalities, and then pillars; but whether round or square, we are uncertain: our curiosity anticipating our progress, cannot rest in suspense: being prompted, by the tendency mentioned, to suppose the most complete pillar, or that which is the most agreeable to the eye, we immediately perceive, or seem to perceive, a number of columns: if upon a near approach we find pilasters only, the disappointment makes these pilasters appear disagreeable; when abstracted from that circumstance, they would only have appeared somewhat less agreeable. But as this deception cannot happen in the inner front inclosing a court, I see no reason for excluding pilasters from such a front, when there is any cause for preferring them before columns.

With respect now to the parts of a column, a bare uniform cylinder without a capital, appears naked; and without a base, appears too ticklishly placed to stand firm:\* it ought therefore to have some finishing at the top and at the bottom. Hence the three chief parts of a column, the shaft, the base, and the capital. Nature, undoubtedly, requires proportion among these parts, but it admits variety of proportion. I suspect that the proportions in use have been influenced in some degree by the human figure; the capital being conceived as the head, the base as the feet. With respect to the base, indeed, the principle of utility interposes to vary it from the human figure: the base must be so proportioned to the whole, as to give the column the appearance of stability.

We find three orders of columns among the Greeks, the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian, distinguished from each other by their destination as well as by their ornaments. It has been warmly disputed, whether any new order can be added to these. Some hold the affirmative, and give for instances the Tuscan and Composite: others deny, and maintain that these properly are not distinct orders, but only the original orders with some slight variations. Among writers who do not agree upon any standard for distinguishing the different orders from each other, the dispute can never have an end. What occurs to me on this subject is what follows.

The only circumstances that can serve to distinguish one order from another, are the form of the column, and its destination. To make the first a distinguishing mark, without regard to the other, would multiply these orders without end; for a color is not more susceptible of different shades, than a column is of different forms. Destination is more limited, as it leads to distinguish columns into three kinds or orders; one plain and strong, for the purpose of supporting plain and massy buildings; one delicate and graceful,

\* A column without a base is disagreeable, because it seems in a tottering condition; yet a tree without a base is agreeable; and the reason is, that we know it to be firmly rooted. This observation shows how much taste is influenced by action.

for supporting buildings of that character; and between these, one for supporting buildings of a middle character. This distinction, which regards the different purposes of a column, is not naturally liable to any objection, considering that it tends also to regulate the form, and in some measure the ornaments, of a column. To enlarge the division by taking in a greater variety of purposes, would be of little use, and, if admitted, would have no end; for from the very nature of the foregoing division, there can be no good reason for adding a fourth order, more than a fifth, a sixth, &c. without any possible circumscription.

To illustrate this doctrine, I make the following observation. If we regard destination only, the Tuscan is of the same order with the Doric, and the Composite with the Corinthian: but if we regard form merely, they are of different orders.

The ornaments of these three orders ought to be so contrived as to make them look like what they are intended for. Plain and rustic ornaments would be not a little discordant with the elegance of the Corinthian order; and ornaments sweet and delicate no less so, with the strength of the Doric. For that reason, I am not altogether satisfied with the ornaments of the last mentioned order: if they be not too delicate, they are at least too numerous for a pillar in which the character of utility prevails over that of beauty. The crowding of ornaments would be more sufferable in a column of an opposite character. But this is a slight objection, and I wish I could think the same of what follows. The Corinthian order has been the favorite of two thousand years, and yet I cannot force myself to relish its capital. The invention of this florid capital is ascribed to the sculptor Callimachus, who took a hint from the plant *Acanthus*, growing round a basket placed accidentally upon it: and in fact the capital under consideration represents pretty accurately a basket so ornamented. This object, or its imitation in stone, placed upon a pillar, may look well; but to make it the capital of a pillar intended to support a building, must give the pillar an appearance inconsistent with its destination: an acanthus, or any tender plant, may require support, but is altogether insufficient to support any thing heavier than a bee or a butterfly. This capital must also bear the weight of another objection: to represent a vine wreathing round a column with its root seemingly in the ground, is natural; but to represent an acanthus, or any plant, as growing on the top of a column, is unnatural. The elegance of this capital did probably at first draw a veil over its impropriety; and now by long use it has gained an establishment, respected by every artist. Such is the force of custom, even in contradiction to nature!

It will not be gaining much ground to urge, that the basket, or vase, is understood to be the capital, and that the stems and leaves of the plant are to be considered as ornaments merely; for, excepting a plant, nothing can be a more improper support for a great building than a basket or vase even of the firmest texture.

With respect to buildings of every sort, one rule, dictated by utility, is, that they be firm and stable. Another rule, dictated by

beauty, is, that they also appear so: for what appears tottering and in hazard of tumbling, produces in the spectator the painful emotion of fear, instead of the pleasant emotion of beauty; and, accordingly, it is the great care of the artist, that every part of his edifice appear to be well supported. Procopius, describing the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, one of the wonders of the world, mentions with applause a part of the fabric placed above the east front in form of a half-moon, so contrived as to inspire both fear and admiration: for though, says he, it is perfectly well supported, yet it is suspended in such a manner as if it were to tumble down the next moment. This conceit is a sort of false wit in architecture, which men were fond of in the infancy of the fine arts. A turret jutting out from an angle in the uppermost story of a Gothic tower, is a witticism of the same kind.

To succeed in allegorical or emblematic ornaments, is no slight effort of genius; for it is extremely difficult to dispose them so in a building as to produce any good effect. The mixing them with realities, makes a miserable jumble of truth and fiction.\* In a basso-relievo on Antonine's pillar, rain obtained by the prayers of a Christian legion, is expressed by joining to the group of soldiers a rainy Jupiter, with water in abundance falling from his head and beard. De Piles, fond of the conceit, carefully informs his reader, that he must not take this for a real Jupiter, but for a symbol which among the Pagans signified rain: he never once considers, that a symbol or emblem ought not to make part of a group representing real objects or real events; but be so detached, as even at first view to appear an emblem. But this is not all, nor the chief point: every emblem ought to be rejected that is not clearly expressive of its meaning; for if it be in any degree obscure, it puzzles, and does not please. The temples of Ancient and Modern Virtue in the gardens of Stow, appear not at first view emblematical; and when we are informed that they are so, it is not easy to gather their meaning: the spectator sees one temple entire, another in ruins; but without an explanatory inscription, he may guess, but cannot be certain, that the former being dedicated to Ancient Virtue, the latter to Modern Virtue, are intended a satire upon the present times. On the other hand, a trite emblem, like a trite simile, is disgusting.† Nor ought an emblem more than a simile to be founded on low or familiar objects; for if these be not agreeable as well as their meaning, the emblem upon the whole will not be relished. A room in a dwelling-house containing a monument to a deceased friend, is dedicated to Melancholy: it has a clock that strikes every minute, to signify how swiftly time passes—upon the monument, weeping figures and other hackneyed ornaments commonly found upon tombstones, with a stuffed raven in a corner—verses on death, and other serious subjects, inscribed all around. The objects are too familiar, and the artifice too apparent, to produce the intended effect.‡

\* See Chap. 20. sect. 5.

† See Chap. 8.

‡ In the city of Mexico, there was a palace termed *the house of affliction*, where Montezuma retired upon losing any of his friends, or upon any public calamity

The statue of Moses striking a rock from which water actually issues, is also in a false taste; for it is mixing reality with representation. Moses himself may bring water out of the rock, but this miracle is too much for his statue. The same objection lies against a cascade where the statue of a water-god pours out of his urn real water.

I am more doubtful whether the same objection lies against the employing statues of animals as supports, that of a negro, for example, supporting a dial, statues of fish supporting a bason of water, *Termes* supporting a chimney-piece; for when a stone is used as a support, where is the incongruity, it will be said, to cut it into the form of an animal? But leaving this doubtful, another objection occurs—that such designs must in some measure be disagreeable, by the appearance of giving pain to a sensitive being.

It is observed above of gardening, that it contributes to rectitude of manners, by inspiring gayety and benevolence. I add another observation, that both gardening and architecture contribute to the same end, by inspiring a taste for neatness and elegance. In Scotland, the regularity and polish even of a turnpike-road has some influence of this kind upon the low people in the neighborhood. They become fond of regularity and neatness; which is displayed, first upon their yards and little inclosures, and next within doors. A taste for regularity and neatness, thus acquired, is extended by degrees to dress, and even to behavior and manners. The author of a history of Switzerland, describing the fierce manners of the plebeians of Bern three or four centuries ago, continually inured to success in war, which made them insolently aim at a change of government in order to establish a pure democracy, observes, that no circumstance tended more to sweeten their manners, and to make them fond of peace, than the public buildings carried on by the senate for ornamenting their capital; particularly a fine town-house, and a magnificent church, which to this day, says our author, stands its ground as one of the finest in Europe.

This house was better adjusted to its destination: it inspired a sort of horror: all was black and dismal: small windows shut up with grates, scarce allowing passage to the light.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## STANDARD OF TASTE.

No disputing about taste, a generally received saying—The difficulty of sapping the foundation of this proverb—The proverb in some cases true and in others not—Nature sparing in her divisions of the scale of pleasures—The difficulties to be encountered in applying the proverb to subjects of taste in general—Our conviction of a common nature—The common nature of man invariable—This common nature also perfect—A right and a wrong taste in morals accounted for on this conviction of a common nature—Opinions in matters of importance rejected, creates uneasiness—The disgust produced by differing from what is judged to be the common standard—The final causes to which uniformity of taste leads—To ascertain what the standard of nature is, of importance—The common sense of mankind, the only standard in the fine arts—The corrupting effect of voluptuousness—The number qualified to be judges in the fine arts, few—The difference of taste in the fine arts, less than is commonly imagined.

“THAT there is no disputing about taste,” meaning taste in its figurative as well as proper sense, is a saying so generally received as to have become a proverb. One thing even at first view is evident, that if the proverb hold true with respect to taste in its proper meaning, it must hold equally true with respect to our other external senses: if the pleasures of the palate disdain a comparative trial, and reject all criticism, the pleasures of touch, of smell, of sound, and even of sight, must be equally privileged. At that rate, a man is not within the reach of censure, even where he prefers the Saracen’s head upon a sign-post before the best tablature of Raphael, or a rude Gothic tower before the finest Grecian building; or where he prefers the smell of a rotten carcass to that of the most odoriferous flower, or discords before the most exquisite harmony.

But we cannot stop here. If the pleasures of external sense be exempted from criticism, why not every one of our pleasures, from whatever source derived? if taste in its proper sense cannot be disputed, there is little room for disputing it in its figurative sense. The proverb accordingly comprehends both; and in that large sense may be resolved into the following general proposition, that with respect to the perceptions of sense, by which some objects appear agreeable, some disagreeable, there is not such a thing as a *good* or a *bad*, a *right*, or a *wrong*; that every man’s taste is to himself an ultimate standard without appeal; and consequently that there is no ground of censure against any one, if such a one there be, who prefers Blackmore to Homer, selfishness to benevolence, or cowardice to magnanimity.

The proverb in the foregoing examples is indeed carried very far: it seems difficult, however, to sap its foundation, or with success to attack it from any quarter: for is not every man equally a judge of what ought to be agreeable or disagreeable to himself? does it seem whimsical, and perhaps absurd, to assert, that a man *ought not* to be pleased when he is, or that he *ought* to be pleased when he is not?

This reasoning may perplex, but will never afford conviction. every one of taste will reject it as false, however unqualified to detect

the fallacy. At the same time, though no man of taste will assent to the proverb as holding true in every case, no man will affirm that it holds true in no case: objects there are, undoubtedly, that we may like or dislike indifferently, without any imputation upon our taste. Were a philosopher to make a scale for human pleasures, he would not think of making divisions without end; but would rank together many pleasures arising perhaps from different objects, either as equally conducing to happiness, or differing so imperceptibly as to make a separation unnecessary. Nature has taken this course, at least it appears so to the generality of mankind. There may be subdivisions without end; but we are only sensible of the grosser divisions, comprehending each of them various pleasures equally affecting; to these the proverb is applicable in the strictest sense; for with respect to pleasures of the same rank, what ground can there be for preferring one to another? if a preference in fact be given by any individual, it cannot proceed from taste, but from custom, imitation, or some peculiarity of mind.

Nature, in her scale of pleasures, has been sparing of divisions: she has wisely and benevolently filled every division with many pleasures, in order that individuals may be contented with their own lot, without envying that of others. Many hands must be employed to procure us the conveniences of life; and it is necessary that the different branches of business, whether more or less agreeable, be filled with hands: a taste too refined would obstruct that plan; for it would crowd some employments, leaving others, no less useful, totally neglected. In our present condition, lucky it is that the plurality are not delicate in their choice, but fall in readily with the occupations, pleasures, food, and company, that fortune throws in their way; and if at first there be any displeasing circumstance, custom soon makes it easy.

The proverb will hold true as to the particulars now explained; but when applied in general to every subject of taste, the difficulties to be encountered are insuperable. We need only to mention the difficulty that arises from human nature itself; do we not talk of a good and a bad taste? of a right and a wrong taste? and upon that supposition, do we not, with great confidence, censure writers, painters, architects, and every one who deals in the fine arts? Are such criticisms absurd, and void of common sense? have the foregoing expressions, familiar in all languages and among all people, no sort of meaning? This can hardly be; for what is universal, must have a foundation in nature. If we can reach that foundation, the standard of taste will no longer be a secret.

We have a sense or conviction of a common nature, not only in our own species, but in every species of animals: and our conviction is verified by experience; for there appears a remarkable uniformity among creatures of the same kind, and a deformity no less remarkable among creatures of different kinds. This common nature is conceived to be a model or standard for each individual that belongs to the kind. Hence it is a wonder to find an individual deviating from the common nature of the species, whether in its internal or external



construction: a child born with aversion to its mother's milk, is a wonder, no less than if born without a mouth, or with more than one.\* This conviction of a common nature in every species, paves the way finely for distributing things into *genera* and *species*; to which we are extremely prone, not only with regard to animals and vegetables, where nature has led the way; but also with regard to many other things, where there is no ground for such distribution, but fancy merely.

With respect to the common nature of man in particular, we have a conviction that it is invariable not less than universal; that it will be the same hereafter as at present, and as it was in time past; the same among all nations and in all corners of the earth. Nor are we deceived; because, giving allowance for the difference of culture and gradual refinement of manners, the fact corresponds to our conviction.

We are so constituted as to conceive this common nature to be not only invariable, but also *perfect* or *right*; and consequently that individuals *ought* to be made conformable to it. Every remarkable deviation from the standard makes, accordingly, an impression upon us of imperfection, irregularity, or disorder: it is disagreeable, raises in us a painful emotion: monstrous births, exciting the curiosity of a philosopher, fail not at the same time to excite a sort of horror.

This conviction of a common nature or standard and of its perfection, accounts clearly for that remarkable conception we have of a right and a wrong sense or taste in morals. It accounts not less clearly for the conception we have of a right and a wrong sense or taste in the fine arts. A man who, avoiding objects generally agreeable, delights in objects generally disagreeable, is condemned as a monster: we disapprove his taste as bad or wrong, because we have a clear conception that he deviates from the common standard. If man were so framed as not to have any notion of a common standard, the proverb mentioned in the beginning would hold universally, not only in the fine arts, but in morals: upon that supposition, the taste of every man, with respect to both, would to himself be an ultimate standard. But as the conviction of a common standard is universal and a branch of our nature, we intuitively conceive a taste to be right or good, if conformable to the common standard, and wrong or bad if disconformable.

No particular in human nature is more universal, than the uneasiness a man feels when in matters of importance his opinions are rejected by others: why should difference in opinion create uneasiness, more than difference in stature, in countenance, or in dress? the conviction of a common standard explains the mystery: every man, generally speaking, taking it for granted that his opinions agree with the common sense of mankind, is, therefore, disgusted with those who think differently, not as differing from him, but as differing from the common standard: hence in all disputes, we find the parties, each of them equally appealing constantly to the common sense of mankind as the ultimate rule or standard. With respect to points

\* See *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*, Part I. Essay 2. ch. 1.



arbitrary or indifferent, which are not supposed to be regulated by any standard, individuals are permitted to think for themselves with impunity: the same liberty is not indulged with respect to points that are reckoned of moment; for what reason, other than that the standard by which these are regulated, ought, as we judge, to produce a uniformity of opinion in all men? In a word, to this conviction of a common standard must be wholly attributed the pleasure we take in those who espouse the same principles and opinions with ourselves, as well as the aversion we have at those who differ from us. In matters left indifferent by the standard, we find nothing of the same pleasure or pain: a bookish man, unless swayed by convenience, relishes not the contemplative man more than the active; his friends and companions are chosen indifferently out of either class: a painter consorts with a poet or musician, as readily as with those of his own art; and one is not the more agreeable to me for loving beef, as I do, nor the less agreeable for preferring mutton.

I have ventured to say, that my disgust is raised, not by differing from me, but by differing from what I judge to be the common standard. This point, being of importance, ought to be firmly established. Men, it is true, are prone to flatter themselves, by taking it for granted that their opinions and their taste are in all respects conformable to the common standard; but there may be exceptions, and experience shows there are some: there are instances without number, of persons who are addicted to the grosser amusements of gaming, eating, drinking, without having any relish for more elegant pleasures; such, for example, as are afforded by the fine arts: yet these very persons, talking the same language with the rest of mankind, pronounce in favor of the more elegant pleasures, and they invariably approve those who have a more refined taste, being ashamed of their own as low and sensual. It is in vain to think of giving a reason for this singular impartiality, other than the authority of the common standard with respect to the dignity of human nature:\* and from the instances now given, we discover that the authority of that standard, even upon the most grovelling souls, is so vigorous, as to prevail over self-partiality, and to make them despise their own taste compared with the more elevated taste of others.

Uniformity of taste and sentiment resulting from our conviction of a common standard, leads to two important final causes; the one respecting our duty, the other our pastime. Barely to mention the first shall be sufficient, because it does not properly belong to the present undertaking. Unhappy it would be for us did not uniformity prevail in morals: that our actions should uniformly be directed to what is good and against what is ill, is the greatest blessing in society; and in order to uniformity of action, uniformity of opinion and sentiment is indispensable.

With respect to pastime in general, and the fine arts in particular, the final cause of uniformity is illustrious. Uniformity of taste gives opportunity for sumptuous and elegant buildings, for fine gardens, and extensive embellishments, which please universally; and the rea

\* See Chap. 11.

son is, that without uniformity of taste, there could not be any suitable reward, either of profit or honor, to encourage men of genius to labor in such works, and to advance them toward perfection. The same uniformity of taste is equally necessary to perfect the art of music, sculpture, and painting, and to support the expense they require after they are brought to perfection. Nature is, in every particular, consistent with herself: we are framed by Nature to have a high relish for the fine arts, which are a great source of happiness, and friendly in a high degree to virtue: we are, at the same time, framed with uniformity of taste, to furnish proper objects for that high relish; and if uniformity did not prevail, the fine arts could never have made any figure.

And this suggests another final cause no less illustrious. The separation of men into different classes, by birth, office, or occupation, however necessary, tends to relax the connection that ought to be among members of the same state; which bad effect is in some measure prevented by the access all ranks of people have to public spectacles, and to amusements that are best enjoyed in company. Such meetings, where every one partakes of the same pleasures in common, are no slight support to the social affections.

Thus, upon a conviction common to the species is erected a standard of taste, which without hesitation is applied to the taste of every individual. That standard, ascertaining what actions are right what wrong, what proper what improper, has enabled moralists to establish rules for our conduct, from which no person is permitted to swerve. We have the same standard for ascertaining in all the fine arts, what is beautiful or ugly, high or low, proper or improper, proportioned or disproportioned: and here, as in morals, we justly condemn every taste that deviates from what is thus ascertained by the common standard.

That there exists a rule or standard in nature for trying the taste of individuals, in the fine arts as well as in morals, is a discovery; but is not sufficient to complete the task undertaken. A branch still more important remains upon hand; which is, to ascertain what is truly the standard of nature, that we may not lie open to have a false standard imposed on us. But what means shall be employed for bringing to light this natural standard? This is not obvious: for when we have recourse to general opinion and general practice, we are betrayed into endless perplexities. History informs us, that nothing is more variable than taste in the fine arts: judging by numbers, the Gothic taste of architecture must be preferred before that of Greece, and the Chinese taste probably before either. It would be endless to recount the various tastes that have prevailed in different ages with respect to gardening, and still prevail in different countries. Despising the modest coloring of nature, women of fashion in France daub their cheeks with a red powder; nay, an unnatural swelling in the neck, peculiar to the inhabitants of the Alps, is relished by that people. But we ought not to be discouraged by such untoward instances, when we find as great variety in moral opinions: was it not among some nations held lawful for a man to

sell his children for slaves, to expose them in their infancy to wild beasts, and to punish them for the crime of their parents? was any thing more common than to murder an enemy in cold blood? nay, more, did not law once authorise the abominable practice of human sacrifices, no less impious than immoral? Such aberrations from the rules of morality prove only, that men, originally savage and brutal, acquire not rationality nor delicacy of taste till they be long disciplined in society. To ascertain the rules of morality, we appeal not to the common sense of savages, but of men in their more perfect state: and we make the same appeal in forming the rules that ought to govern the fine arts: in neither can we safely rely on a local or transitory taste; but on what is the most general and the most lasting among polite nations.

In this very manner, a standard for morals has been ascertained with a good deal of accuracy, and is daily applied by able judges with general satisfaction. The standard of taste in the fine arts, is not yet brought to such perfection; and we can account for its slower progress: the sense of right and wrong in actions is vivid and distinct, because its objects are clearly distinguishable from each other; whereas the sense of right and wrong in the fine arts is faint and wavering, because its objects are commonly not so clearly distinguishable from each other, and there appears to me a striking final cause in thus distinguishing the moral sense from the sense of right and wrong in the fine arts. The former, as a rule of conduct, and as a law we ought to obey, must be clear and authoritative. The latter is not entitled to the same privilege, because it contributes to our pleasure and amusement only: were it strong and lively, it would usurp upon our duty, and call off the attention from matters of greater moment: were it clear and authoritative, it would banish all difference of taste, leaving no distinction between a refined taste and one that is not so: which would put an end to rivalry, and consequently to all improvement.

But to return to our subject. However languid and cloudy the common sense of mankind may be as to the fine arts, it is notwithstanding the only standard in these as well as in morals. True it is indeed, that in gathering the common sense of mankind, more circumspection is requisite with respect to the fine arts than with respect to morals: upon the latter, any person may be consulted: but in the former, a wary choice is necessary, for to collect votes indifferently would certainly mislead us. Those who depend for food on bodily labor, are totally void of taste; of such a taste at least as can be of use in the fine arts. This consideration bars the greater part of mankind; and of the remaining part, many by a corrupted taste are unqualified for voting. The common sense of mankind must then be confined to the few that fall not under these exceptions. But as such selection seems to throw matters again into uncertainty, we must be more explicit upon this branch of our subject.

Nothing tends more than voluptuousness to corrupt the whole internal frame, and to vitiate our taste, not only in the fine arts, but even in morals: voluptuousness never fails, in course of time, to

extinguish all the sympathetic affections, and to bring on a beastly selfishness, which leaves nothing of man but the shape: about excluding such persons there will be no dispute. Let us next bring under trial, the opulent who delight in expense: the appetite for superiority and respect, inflamed by riches, is vented upon costly furniture, numerous attendants, a princely dwelling, sumptuous feasts, every thing superb and gorgeous, to amaze and humble all beholders: simplicity, elegance, propriety, and things natural, sweet, or amiable, are despised or neglected; for these are not appropriated to the rich, nor make a figure in the public eye: in a word, nothing is relished, but what serves to gratify pride, by an imaginary exaltation of the possessor above those who surround him. Such sentiments contract the heart, and make every principle give way to self-love: benevolence and public spirit, with all their refined emotions, are little felt, and less regarded; and if these be excluded, there can be no place for the faint and delicate emotions of the fine arts.

The exclusion of classes so many and numerous, reduces within a narrow compass those who are qualified to be judges in the fine arts. Many circumstances are necessary to form such a judge: there must be a good natural taste; that is, a taste approaching, at least in some degree, to the delicacy of taste above described:\* that taste must be improved by education, reflection, and experience:† it must be preserved in vigor by living regularly, by using the goods of fortune with moderation, and by following the dictates of improved nature, which give welcome to every rational pleasure without indulging any excess. This is the tenor of life which of all contributes the most to refinement of taste; and the same tenor of life contributes the most to happiness in general.

If there appear much uncertainty in a standard that requires so painful and intricate a selection, we may possibly be reconciled to it by the following consideration, that with respect to the fine arts there is less difference of taste than is commonly imagined. Nature

\* Chap. 2. Part 2.

† That these particulars are useful, it may be said necessary, for acquiring a discerning taste in the fine arts, will appear from the following facts, which show the influence of experience singly. Those who live in the world and in good company, are quick-sighted with respect to every defect or irregularity in behavior: the very slightest singularity in motion, in speech, or in dress, which to a peasant would be invisible, escapes not their observation. The most minute differences in the human countenance, so minute as to be far beyond the reach of words, are distinctly perceived by the plainest person: while at the same time, the generality have very little discernment in the faces of other animals to which they are less accustomed: sheep, for example, appear to have all the same face, except to the shepherd, who knows every individual in his flock as he does his relations and neighbors. The very populace in Athens were critics in language, in pronunciation, and even in eloquence, harangues being their daily entertainment. In Rome, at present, the most illiterate shopkeeper is a better judge of statues and of pictures, than persons of refined education in London. These facts afford convincing evidence, that a discerning taste depends still more on experience than on nature. But these facts merit peculiar regard for another reason, that they open to us a sure method of improving our taste in the fine arts; which, with those who have leisure for improvements, ought to be a powerful incitement to cultivate a taste in these arts: an occupation that cannot fail to embellish their manners and to sweeten society.

has marked all her works with indelible characters of high or low, plain or elegant, strong or weak: these, if at all perceived, are seldom misapprehended; and the same marks are equally perceptible in works of art. A defective taste is incurable; and it hurts none but the possessor, because it carries no authority to impose upon others. I know not if there be such a thing as a taste naturally bad or wrong; a taste, for example, that prefers a grovelling pleasure before one that is high and elegant: grovelling pleasures are never preferred; they are only made welcome by those who know no better. Differences about objects of taste, it is true, are endless; but they generally concern trifles, or possibly matters of equal rank, where preference may be given either way with impunity: if, on any occasion, persons differ where they ought not, a depraved taste will readily be discovered on one or other side, occasioned by imitation, custom, or corrupted manners, such as are described above. And considering that every individual partakes of a common nature, what is there that should occasion any wide difference in taste or sentiment? By the principles that constitute the sensitive part of our nature, a wonderful uniformity is preserved in the emotions and feelings of the different races of men; the same object making upon every person the same impression, the same in kind, if not in degree. There have been, as above observed, aberrations from these principles; but soon or late they prevail, and restore the wanderer to the right tract.

I know but of one other means for ascertaining the common sense of mankind; which I mention, not in despair, but in great confidence of success. As the taste of every individual ought to be governed by the principles above mentioned, an appeal to these principles must necessarily be decisive of every controversy that can arise upon matters of taste. In general, every doubt with relation to the common sense of man, or standard of taste, may be cleared by the same appeal; and to unfold these principles is the declared purpose of the present undertaking.

# APPENDIX.

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## TERMS DEFINED OR EXPLAINED.

1. EVERY thing we perceive or are conscious of, whether a being or a quality, a passion or an action, is with respect to the percipient termed an *object*. Some objects appear to be internal, or within the mind; passion, for example, thinking, volition: some external; such as every object of sight, of hearing, of smell, of touch, of taste.

2. That act of the mind which makes known to me an external object, is termed *perception*. That act of the mind which makes known to me an internal object, is termed *consciousness*. The power or faculty from which consciousness proceeds, is termed an *internal sense*. The power or faculty from which perception proceeds, is termed an *external sense*. This distinction refers to the objects of our knowledge; for the senses, whether external or internal, are all powers or faculties of the mind.\*

3. But as self is an object that cannot be termed either external or internal, the faculty by which I have knowledge of myself, is a *sense* that cannot properly be termed either internal or external.

4. By the eye we perceive figure, color, motion, &c.: by the ear we perceive the different qualities of sound, high, low, loud, soft: by touch we perceive rough, smooth, hot, cold, &c.: by taste we perceive sweet, sour, bitter, &c.: by smell we perceive fragrant, fetid, &c.: These qualities partake the common nature of all qualities, that they are not capable of an independent existence, but must belong to some being of which they are properties or attributes. A being with respect to its properties or attributes is termed a *subject* or *sub-*

\* I have complied with all who have gone before me in describing the senses internal and external to be powers or faculties; and yet, after much attention, I have not discovered any thing active in their operations to entitle them to that character. The following chain of thought has led me to hesitate. One being operates on another: the first is active, the other passive. If the first act, it must have a power to act: if an effect be produced on the other, it must have a *capacity* to have that effect produced upon it. Fire melts wax, *ergo* fire has a power to produce that effect; and wax must be capable to have that effect produced in it. Now as to the senses. A tree in flourish makes an impression on me, and by that means I see the tree. But in this operation I do not find that the mind is active; seeing the tree is only an effect produced on it by intervention of the rays of light. What seems to have led us into an error is the word *seeing*, which, under the form of an active verb, has a passive signification. *I feel* is a similar example; for to feel is certainly not to act, but the effect of being acted upon: the feeling of pleasure is the effect produced in my mind when a beautiful object is presented. Perception, accordingly, is not an action, but an effect produced in the mind. Sensation is another effect: it is the pleasure I feel upon perceiving what is agreeable.

*stratum*. Every substratum of visible qualities, is termed *substance*; and of tangible qualities, *body*.

5. Substance and sound are perceived as existing at a distance from the organ; often at a considerable distance. But smell, touch, and taste, are perceived as existing at the organ of sense.

6. The objects of external sense are various. Substances are perceived by the eye; bodies by the touch. Sounds, tastes, and smells, passing commonly under the name of secondary qualities, require more explanation than there is room for here. All the objects of internal sense are attributes: witness deliberation, reasoning, resolution, willing, consenting, which are internal actions. Passions and emotions, which are internal agitations, are also attributes. With regard to the former, I am conscious of being active; with regard to the latter, I am conscious of being passive.

7. Again, we are conscious of internal action as in the head; of passions and emotions as in the heart.

8. Many actions may be excited internally, and many effects produced, of which we are unconscious: when we investigate the ultimate cause of the motion of the blood, and of other internal motions upon which life depends, it is the most probable opinion that some internal power is the cause; and if so, we are unconscious of the operations of that power. But consciousness being implied in the very meaning of deliberating, reasoning, resolving, willing, consenting, such operations cannot escape our knowledge. The same is the case of passions and emotions; for no internal agitation is denominated a passion or emotion, but those of which we are conscious.

9. The mind is not always the same: by turns it is cheerful, melancholy, calm, peevish, &c. These differences may not improperly be denominated *tones*.

10. Perception and sensation are commonly reckoned synonymous terms, signifying that internal act by which external objects are made known to us. But they ought to be distinguished. *Perceiving* is a general term for hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, smelling: and therefore *perception* signifies every internal act by which we are made acquainted with external objects. Thus we are said to perceive a certain animal, a certain color, sound, taste, smell, &c. *Sensation* properly signifies that internal act by which we are made conscious of pleasure or pain felt at the organ of sense. Thus we have a sensation of the pleasure arising from warmth, from a fragrant smell, from a sweet taste; and of the pain arising from a wound, from a fetid smell, from a disagreeable taste. In perception, my attention is directed to the external object: in sensation, it is directed to the pleasure or pain I feel.

The terms *perception* and *sensation* are sometimes employed to signify the objects of perception and sensation. Perception in that sense is a general term for every external thing we perceive; and sensation a general term for every pleasure and pain felt at the organ of sense.

11. Conception is different from perception. The latter includes



a conviction of the reality of its object: the former does not; for I can conceive the most extravagant stories told in a romance, without having any conviction of their reality. Conception differs also from imagination. By the power of fancy I can imagine a golden mountain, or an ebony ship with sails and ropes of silk. When I describe a picture of that kind to another, the idea he forms of it is termed a *conception*. Imagination is active, conception is passive.

12. Feeling, beside denoting one of the external senses, is a general term, signifying that internal act by which we are made conscious of our pleasures and our pains; for it is not limited, as sensation is, to any one sort. Thus, feeling being the genus of which sensation is a species, their meaning is the same when applied to pleasure and pain felt at the organ of sense: and accordingly we say indifferently, "I feel pleasure from heat, and pain from cold," or, "I have a sensation of pleasure from heat, and of pain from cold." But the meaning of feeling, as is said, is much more extensive: it is proper to say, I feel pleasure in a sumptuous building, in love, in friendship; and pain in losing a child, in revenge, in envy: sensation is not properly applied to any of these.

The term *feeling* is frequently used in a less proper sense, to signify what we feel or of what we are conscious; and in that sense it is a general term for all our passions and emotions, and for all our other pleasures and pains.

13. That we cannot perceive an external object till an impression is made upon our body, is probable from reason, and is ascertained by experience. But it is not necessary that we be made sensible of the impression: In touching, in tasting, and in smelling, we are sensible of the impression; but not in seeing and hearing. We know, indeed, from experiments, that before we perceive a visible object, its image is spread upon the *retina tunica*; and that before we perceive a sound, an impression is made upon the drum of the ear: but we are not conscious, either of the organic image, or of the organic impression; nor are we conscious of any other operation preparatory to the act of perception; all we can say, is, that we see that river, or hear that trumpet.\*

14. Objects once perceived may be recalled to the mind by the power of memory. When I recal an object of sight in that manner, it appears to me precisely the same as in the original survey, only less distinct. For example, having seen yesterday a spreading oak growing on the brink of a river, I endeavor to recal these objects to my mind. How is this operation performed? Do I endeavor to form in my mind a picture of them or representative image? Not

\* Yet a singular opinion that impressions are the only objects of perception, has been espoused by some philosophers of no mean rank; not attending to the foregoing peculiarity in the senses of seeing and hearing, that we perceive objects without being conscious of an organic impression, or of any impression. See the Treatise upon Human Nature: where we find the following passage, book I. p. 4. sect. 2. "Properly speaking, it is not our body we perceive when we regard our limbs and members; so that the ascribing of a real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind as difficult to explain," &c.

so I transport myself ideally to the place where I saw the tree and river yesterday; upon which I have a perception of these objects, similar in all respects to the perception I had when I viewed them with my eyes, only less distinct. And in this recollection, I am not conscious of a picture or representative image, more than in the original survey; the perception is of the tree and river themselves, as at first. I confirm this by another experiment. After attentively surveying a fine statue, I close my eyes. What follows? The same object continues, without any difference but that it is less distinct than formerly.\* This indistinct secondary perception of an object, is

\* This experiment, which every one may reiterate till entire satisfaction be obtained, is of greater importance than at first view may appear; for it strikes at the root of a celebrated doctrine, which for more than two thousand years has misled many philosophers. This doctrine as delivered by Aristotle is, in substance, "That of every object of thought there must be in the mind some form, phantasm, or species; that things sensible are perceived and remembered by means of sensible phantasms, and things intelligible by intelligible phantasms; and that these phantasms have the form of the object without the matter, as the impression of a seal upon wax has the form of a seal without its matter." The followers of Aristotle add, "That the sensible and intelligible forms of things, are sent forth from the things themselves, and make impressions upon the passive intellect, which impressions are perceived by the active intellect." This notion differs very little from that of Epicurus, which is, "That all things send forth constantly and in every direction, slender ghosts, or films of themselves, (*tenuia simulacra*, as expressed by his commentator Lucretius;) which striking upon the mind, are the means of perception, dreaming." &c. Des Cartes, bent to oppose Aristotle, rejects the doctrine of sensible and intelligible phantasms; maintaining however the same doctrine in effect, namely, that we perceive nothing external but by means of some image either in the brain or in the mind: and these images he terms *ideas*. According to these philosophers, we perceive nothing immediately but phantasms or ideas; and from these we infer, by reasoning, the existence of external objects. Locke, adopting this doctrine, employs almost the whole of his book about ideas. He holds, that we cannot perceive, remember, nor imagine, any thing, but by having an idea or image of it in the mind. He agrees with Descartes, that we can have no knowledge of things external, but what we acquire by reasoning upon their ideas or images in the mind; taking it for granted, that we are conscious of these ideas or images, and of nothing else. Those who talk the most intelligibly explain the doctrine thus: When I see in a mirror a man standing behind me, the immediate object of my sight is his image, without which I could not see him: in like manner, when I see a tree or a house, there must be an image of these objects in my brain or in my mind; which image is the immediate object of my perception; and by means of that image I perceive the external object.

One would not readily suspect any harm in this ideal system, other than the leading us into a labyrinth of metaphysical errors, in order to account for our knowledge of external objects, which is more truly and more simply accounted for by direct perception. And yet some late writers have been able to extract from it death and destruction to the whole world, levelling all down to a mere chaos of ideas. Dr. Berkeley, upon authority of the philosophers named, taking for granted that we cannot perceive any object but what is in the mind, discovered, that the reasoning employed by Des Cartes and Locke to infer the existence of external objects, is inconclusive; and upon that discovery ventured, against common sense, to annihilate totally the material world. And a later writer, discovering that Berkeley's arguments might with equal success be applied against immaterial beings, ventures still more boldly to reject by the lump the immaterial world as well as the material; leaving nothing in nature but images or ideas floating in *vacuo*, without affording them a single mind for shelter or support.

When such wild and extravagant consequences can be drawn from the ideal system, it might have been expected, that no man who is not crazy would have ventured to erect such a superstructure, till he should first be certain beyond all

termed an *idea*. And therefore the precise and accurate definition of an idea in contradistinction to an original perception is, "That perception of a real object which is raised in the mind by the power of memory." Every thing, of which we have any knowledge, whether internal or external, passions, emotions, thinking, resolving, willing, heat, cold, &c. as well as external objects, may be recalled as above, by the power of memory.\*

doubt of a solid foundation. And yet upon inquiry, we find the foundation of this terrible doctrine to be no better than a shallow metaphysical argument, *namely*, "That no being can act but where it is; and, consequently, that it cannot act upon any subject at a distance." This argument possesses indeed one eminent advantage, that its obscurity, like that of an oracle, is apt to impose upon the reader, who is willing to consider it as a demonstration, because he does not clearly see the fallacy. The best way to give it a fair trial, is to draw it out of its obscurity, and to state it in a clear light, as follows. "No subject can be perceived unless it act upon the mind, but no distant subject can act upon the mind, because no being can act but where it is: and, therefore, the immediate object of perception must be something united to the mind, so as to be able to act upon it." Here the argument is completed in all its parts; and from it is derived the supposed necessity of phantasms or ideas united to the mind, as the only objects of perception. It is singularly unlucky, that this argument concludes directly against the very system of which it is the only foundation; for how can phantasms or ideas be raised in the mind by things at a distance, if things at a distance cannot act upon the mind? I say more, that it assumes a proposition as true, without evidence, *namely*, That no distant subject can act upon the mind. This proposition undoubtedly requires evidence, for it is not intuitively certain. And, therefore, till the proposition be demonstrated, every man without scruple may rely upon the conviction of his senses, that he hears and sees things at a distance.

But I venture a bolder step, which is, to show that the proposition is false. Admitting that no being can act but where it is, is there any thing more simple or more common, than the acting upon subjects at a distance by intermediate means? This holds in fact with respect both to seeing and hearing. When I see a tree, for example, rays of light are reflected from the tree to my eye, forming a picture upon the *retina tunica*; but the object perceived is the tree itself, not the rays of light, nor the picture. In this manner distant objects are perceived, without any action of the object upon the mind, or of the mind upon the object. Hearing is in a similar case: the air, put in motion by thunder, makes an impression upon the drum of the ear; but this impression is not what I hear, it is the thunder itself by means of that impression.

With respect to vision in particular, we are profoundly ignorant by what means and in what manner the picture on the *retina tunica* contributes to produce a sight of the object. One thing only is clear, that as we have no knowledge of that picture, it is as natural to conceive that it should be made the instrument of discovering the external object, and not itself, as of discovering itself only, and not the external object.

Upon the chimerical consequences drawn from the ideal system, I shall make but a single reflection. Nature determines us necessarily to rely on the veracity of our senses; and upon their evidence the existence of external objects is to us a matter of intuitive knowledge and absolute certainty. Vain therefore is the attempt of Dr. Berkeley and of his followers, to deceive us, by a metaphysical subtlety, into a disbelief of what we cannot entertain even the slightest doubt.

\* From this definition of an idea, the following proposition must be evident, That there can be no such thing as an innate idea. If the original perception of an object be not innate, which is obvious; it is not less obvious, that the idea or secondary perception of that object cannot be innate. And yet, to prove this self-evident proposition, Locke has bestowed a whole book of his *Treatise upon Human Understanding*. So necessary it is to give accurate definitions, and so preventive of dispute are definitions when accurate. Dr. Berkeley has taken great pains to prove another proposition equally evident, That there can be no such thing as a general idea: all our original perceptions are of particular objects, and our secondary perceptions or ideas must be equally so.

15. External objects are distinguishable into simple and complex. Certain sounds are so simple as not to be resolvable into parts; and so are certain tastes and smells. Objects of touch are for the most part complex: they are not only hard or soft, but also smooth or rough, hot or cold. Of all external objects, visible objects are commonly the most complex: a tree is composed of a trunk, branches, leaves: it has color, figure, size. But as an action is not resolvable into parts, a perception, being an act of sense, is always simple. The color, figure, umbrage of a spreading oak, raise not different perceptions: the perception is one, that of a tree, colored, figured, &c. A quality is never perceived separately from the subject; nor a part from the whole. There is a mental power of abstraction, of which we shall speak afterward; but the eye never abstracts, nor any other external sense.

16. Many particulars besides those mentioned, enter into the perception of visible objects; motion, rest, place, space, time, number, &c. These, all of them, denote simple ideas, and for that reason admit not of a definition. All that can be done, is to point out how they are acquired. The ideas of motion and of rest, are familiar even to a child, from seeing its nurse sometimes walking, sometimes sitting: the former it is taught to call *motion*; the latter, *rest*. Place enters into every perception of a visible object: the object is perceived to exist, and to exist somewhere, on the right hand or on the left, and where it exists is termed *place*. Ask a child where its mother is, or in what place: it will answer readily, she is in the garden. Space is connected with size or bulk: every piece of matter occupies *room* or *space* in proportion to its bulk. A child perceives that when its little box is filled with playthings, there is no room or space for more. Space is also applied to signify the distance of visible objects from each other; and such space accordingly can be measured. Dinner comes after breakfast, and supper after dinner: a child perceives an interval, and that interval it learns to call *time*. A child sometimes is alone with its nurse: its mother is sometimes in the room; and sometimes also its brothers and sisters. It perceives a difference between many and few; and that difference it is taught to call *number*.

17. The primary perception of a visible object, is more complete, lively, and distinct, than that of any other object. And for that reason, an idea or secondary perception of a visible object, is also more complete, lively, and distinct, than that of any other object. A fine passage in music, may, for a moment, be recalled to the mind with tolerable accuracy; but, after the shortest interval, it becomes no less obscure than the ideas of the other objects mentioned.

18. As the range of an individual is commonly within a narrow space, it rarely happens, that every thing necessary to be known comes under our own perceptions. Language is an admirable contrivance for supplying that deficiency; for by language every man's perceptions may be communicated to all: and the same may be done by painting and other imitative arts. The facility of communication depends on the liveliness of the ideas; especially in language,

which hitherto has not arrived at greater perfection than to express clear ideas: hence it is, that poets and orators, who are extremely successful in describing objects of sight, find objects of the other senses too faint and obscure for language. An idea thus acquired of an object at second hand, ought to be distinguished from an idea of memory though their resemblance has occasioned the same term *idea* to be applied to both; which is to be regretted, because ambiguity in the signification of words is a great obstruction to accuracy of conception. Thus nature has furnished the means of multiplying ideas without end, and of providing every individual with a sufficient stock to answer, not only the necessities, but even the elegancies of life.

19. Farther, man is endued with a sort of creative power: he can fabricate images of things that have no existence. The materials employed in this operation, are ideas of sight, which he can take to pieces and combine into new forms at pleasure: their complexity and vivacity make them fit materials. But a man has no such power over any of his other ideas, whether of the external or, internal senses: he cannot, after the utmost effort, combine these into new forms, being too obscure for that operation. An image thus fabricated cannot be called a secondary perception, not being derived from an original perception: the poverty of language, however, as in the case immediately above mentioned, has occasioned the same term *idea* to be applied to all. This singular power of fabricating images without any foundation in reality, is distinguished by the name of *imagination*.

20. As ideas are the chief materials employed in reasoning and reflecting, it is of consequence that their nature and differences be understood. It appears now, that ideas may be distinguished into three kinds: first, ideas derived from original perceptions, properly termed *ideas of memory*; second, ideas communicated by language or other signs; and, third, ideas of imagination. These ideas differ from each other in many respects; but chiefly in respect of their proceeding from different causes: the first kind is derived from real existences that have been objects of our senses: language is the cause of the second, or any other sign that has the same power with language: and a man's imagination is to himself the cause of the third. It is scarcely necessary to add, that an idea, originally of imagination, being conveyed to others by language or any other vehicle, becomes in their mind an idea of the second kind; and again, that an idea of this kind, being afterward recalled to the mind, becomes in that circumstance an idea of memory.

21. We are not so constituted as to perceive objects with indifference: these, with very few exceptions, appear agreeable or disagreeable; and at the same time raise in us pleasant or painful emotions. With respect to external objects in particular, we distinguish those which produce organic impressions, from those which affect us from a distance. When we touch a soft and smooth body, we have a pleasant feeling as at the place of contact; which feeling we distinguish not, at least not accurately, from the agreeableness of the body

itself; and the same holds in general with regard to all organic impressions. It is otherwise in hearing and seeing; a sound is perceived as in itself agreeable, and raises in the hearer a pleasant emotion: an object of sight appears in itself agreeable, and raises in the spectator a pleasant emotion. These are accurately distinguished: the pleasant emotion is felt as within the mind; the agreeableness of the object is placed upon the object, and is perceived as one of its qualities or properties. The agreeable appearance of an object of sight is termed *beauty*; and the disagreeable appearance of such an object is termed *ugliness*.

22. But though beauty and ugliness, in their proper and genuine signification, are confined to objects of sight; yet in a more lax and figurative signification, they are applied to objects of the other senses: they are sometimes applied even to abstract terms: for it is not unusual to say, *a beautiful theorem, a beautiful constitution of government*.

23. A line composed by a single rule, is perceived and said to be regular: a straight line, a parabola, a hyperbola, the circumference of a circle, and of an ellipse, are all regular lines. A figure composed by a single rule, is perceived and said to be regular: a circle, a square, a hexagon, an equilateral triangle, are regular figures, being composed by a single rule, that determines the form of each. When the form of a line or of a figure is ascertained by a single rule that leaves nothing arbitrary, the line and the figure are said to be perfectly regular; which is the case of the figures now mentioned, and the case of a straight line and of the circumference of a circle. A figure and a line that require more than one rule for their construction, or that have any of their parts left arbitrary, are not perfectly regular: a parallelogram and a rhomb are less regular than a square; the parallelogram being subjected to no rule as to the length of sides, other than that the opposite sides be equal; the rhomb being subjected to no rule as to its angles, other than that the opposite angles be equal: for the same reason, the circumference of an ellipse, the form of which is susceptible of much variety, is less regular than that of a circle.

24. Regularity, properly speaking, belongs, like beauty, to objects of sight; and, like beauty, it is also applied figuratively to other objects: thus we say, *a regular government, a regular composition of music, and regular discipline*.

25. When two figures are composed of similar parts, they are said to be uniform. Perfect uniformity is where the constituent parts of two figures are equal: thus two cubes of the same dimensions are perfectly uniform in all their parts. Uniformity less perfect is, where the parts mutually correspond, but without being equal: the uniformity is imperfect between two squares or cubes of unequal dimensions; and still more so between a square and a parallelogram.

26. Uniformity is also applicable to the constituent parts of the same figure. The constituent parts of a square are perfectly uniform; its sides are equal and its angles are equal. Wherein then differs regularity from uniformity? for a figure composed of uniform



parts must undoubtedly be regular. Regularity is predicated of a figure considered as a whole composed of uniform parts: uniformity is predicated of these parts as related to each other by resemblance: we say, a square is a regular, not an uniform, figure; but with respect to the constituent parts of a square, we say not, that they are regular, but that they are uniform.

27. In things destined for the same use, as legs, arms, eyes, windows, spoons, we expect uniformity. Proportion ought to govern parts intended for different uses: we require a certain proportion between a leg and an arm; in the base, the shaft, the capital of a pillar; and in the length, the breadth, the height of a room: some proportion is also required in different things intimately connected, as between a dwelling-house, the garden, and the stables; but we require no proportion among things slightly connected, as between the table a man writes on and the dog that follows him. Proportion and uniformity never coincide: things equal are uniform; but proportion is never applied to them: the four sides and angles of a square are equal and perfectly uniform; but we say not that they are proportional. Thus, proportion always implies inequality or difference; but then it implies it to a certain degree only: the most agreeable proportion resembles a *maximum* in mathematics; a greater or less inequality or difference is less agreeable.

28. Order regards various particulars. First, in tracing or surveying objects, we are directed by a sense of order: we perceive it to be more orderly, that we should pass from a principle to its accessories, and from a whole to its parts, than in the contrary direction. Next, with respect to the position of things, a sense of order directs us to place together things intimately connected. Thirdly, in placing things that have no natural connection, that order appears the most perfect, where the particulars are made to bear the strongest relation to each other that position can give them. Thus parallelism is the strongest relation that position can bestow upon straight lines: if they be so placed as by production to intersect, the relation is less perfect. A large body in the middle, and two equal bodies of less size, one on each side, is an order that produces the strongest relation the bodies are susceptible of by position: the relation between the two equal bodies would be stronger by juxtaposition; but they would not both have the same relation to the third.

29. The beauty or agreeableness of a visible object, is perceived as one of its qualities; which holds, not only in the primary perception, but also in the secondary perception or idea: and hence the pleasure that arises from the idea of a beautiful object. An idea of imagination is also pleasant, though in a lower degree than an idea of memory, where the objects are of the same kind; for an evident reason, that the former is more distinct and lively than the latter. But this inferiority in ideas of imagination, is more than compensated by their greatness and variety, which are boundless; for by the imagination, exerted without control, we can fabricate ideas of finer visible objects, of more noble and heroic actions, of greater wickedness, of more surprising events, than ever in fact existed; and in



communicating such ideas by words, painting, sculpture, &c the influence of the imagination is no less extensive than great.

30. In the nature of every man, there is somewhat original, which distinguishes him from others, which tends to form his character, and to make him meek or fiery, candid or deceitful, resolute or timorous, cheerful or morose. This original bent, termed *disposition*, must be distinguished from a *principle*: the latter, signifying a law of human nature, makes part of the common nature of man; the former makes part of the nature of this or that man. *Propensity* is a name common to both; for it signifies a principle as well as a disposition.

31. *Affection*, signifying a settled bent of mind toward a particular being or thing, occupies a middle place between disposition on the one hand, and passion on the other. It is clearly distinguishable from disposition, which, being a branch of one's nature originally, must exist before there can be an opportunity to exert it upon any particular object; whereas affection can never be original, because, having a special relation to a particular object, it cannot exist till the object have once at least been presented. It is no less clearly distinguishable from passion, which depending on the real or ideal presence of its object, vanishes with its object: whereas affection is a lasting connection; and, like other connections, subsists even when we do not think of the person. A familiar example will clear the whole. I have from nature a disposition to gratitude, which, through want of an object, happens never to be exerted; and which therefore is unknown even to myself. Another who has the same disposition, meets with a kindly office which makes him grateful to his benefactor: an intimate connection is formed between them, termed *affection*; which, like other connections, has a permanent existence, though not always in view. The affection, for the most part, lies dormant, till an opportunity offer for exerting it: in that circumstance, it is converted into the passion of gratitude; and the opportunity is greedily seized of testifying gratitude in the warmest manner.

32. *Aversion*, I think, is opposed to affection; not to desire, as it commonly is. We have an affection to one person; we have an aversion to another: the former disposes us to do good to its object, the latter to do ill.

33. What is a sentiment? It is not a perception; for a perception signifies the act by which we become conscious of external objects. It is not consciousness of an internal action, such as thinking, suspending thought, inclining, resolving, willing, &c. Neither is it the conception of a relation among objects; a conception of that kind being termed *opinion*. The term *sentiment* is appropriated to such thoughts as are prompted by passion.

34. *Attention* is that state of mind which prepares one to receive impressions. According to the degree of attention, objects make a strong or weak impression.\* Attention is requisite even to the sim

\* Bacon, in his Natural History, makes the following observations. Sounds are meliorated by the intension of the sense, where the common sense is collected most to the particular sense of hearing, and the sight suspended. Therefore sounds

ple act of seeing. the eye can take in a considerable field at one look; but no object in the field is seen distinctly, but that singly which fixes the attention: in a profound reverie that totally occupies the attention, we scarce see what is directly before us. In a train of perceptions, the attention being divided among various objects, no particular object makes such a figure as it would do single and apart. Hence, the stillness of night contributes to terror, there being nothing to divert the attention:

Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent.

*Æneid, II.*

All things were full of horror and affright,  
And dreadful even the silence of the night.

*Zara.* Silence and solitude are ev'ry where!  
Through all the gloomy ways and iron doors  
That hither lead, nor human face nor voice  
Is seen or heard. A dreadful din was wont  
To grate the sense, when enter'd here from groans  
And howls of slaves condemn'd, from clink of chains,  
And crash of rusty bars and creaking hinges:  
And ever and anon the sight was dash'd  
With frightful faces and the meagre looks  
Of grim and ghastly executioners.  
Yet more this stillness terrifies my soul  
Than did that scene of complicated horrors.

*Mourning Bride, Act V. Sc. 6.*

And hence it is, that an object seen at the termination of a confined view, is more agreeable than when seen in a group with the surrounding objects:

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark  
When neither is attended; and, I think,  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.

*Merchant of Venice.*

35. In matters of slight importance, attention is mostly directed by will; and for that reason, it is our own fault if trifling objects make any deep impression. Had we power equally to withhold our attention from matters of importance, we might be proof against any deep impression. But our power fails us here: an interesting object seizes and fixes the attention beyond the possibility of contro.; and while our attention is thus forcibly attached to one object, others may solicit for admittance; but in vain, for they will not be regarded. Thus a small misfortune is scarcely felt in presence of a greater:

*Lear.* Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious storm  
Invades us to the skin; so 'tis to thee;  
But where the greater malady is fix'd,  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;  
But if thy flight lay tow'rd the roaring sea,  
Thou'dst meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind's free,  
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,  
Save what beats there.

*King Lear, Act III. Sc. 4.*

are sweeter, as well as greater, in the night than in the day; and I suppose they are sweeter to blind men than to others: and it is manifest, that between sleeping and waking, when all the senses are bound and suspended, music is far sweeter than when one is fully waking.

36. *Genus, species, modification*, are terms invented to distinguish beings from each other. Individuals are distinguished by their qualities. A number of individuals considered with respect to qualities that distinguish them from others, is termed a *species*: a plurality of *species* considered with respect to their distinguishing qualities, is termed a *genus*. That quality which distinguisheth one genus, one species, or even one individual, from another, is termed a *modification*: thus the same particular that is termed a *property* or *quality* when considered as belonging to an individual, or a class of individuals, is termed a *modification* when considered as distinguishing the individual or the class from another: a black skin and soft curled hair, are properties of a negro: the same circumstances considered as marks that distinguish a negro from a man of a different species, are denominated *modifications*.

37. Objects of sight, being complex, are distinguishable into the several particulars that enter into the composition: these objects are all colored; and they all have length, breadth, and thickness. When I behold a spreading oak, I distinguish in that object, size, figure, color, and sometimes motion: in a flowing river, I distinguish color, figure, and constant motion; a die has color, black spots, six plain surfaces, all equal and uniform. Objects of touch have all of them extension: some of them are felt rough, some smooth: some of them are hard, some soft. With respect to the other senses, some of their objects are simple, some complex. A sound, a taste, a smell, may be so simple as not to be distinguishable into parts: others are perceived to be compounded of different sounds, different tastes, and different smells.

38. The eye at one look can grasp a number of objects, as of trees in a field, or men in a crowd: these objects having each a separate and independent existence, are distinguishable in the mind, as well as in reality; and there is nothing more easy than to abstract from some and to confine our contemplation to others. A large oak with its spreading branches fixes our attention upon itself, and abstracts us from the shrubs that surround it. In the same manner, with respect to compound sounds, tastes, or smells, we can fix our thoughts upon any one of the component parts, abstracting our attention from the rest. The power of abstraction is not confined to objects that are separable in reality as well as mentally; but also takes place where there can be no real separation: the size, the figure, the color, of a tree, are inseparably connected, and have no independent existence; the same of length, breadth, and thickness: and yet we can mentally confine our observations to one of these, abstracting from the rest. Here abstraction takes place where there cannot be a real separation.

39. Space and time have occasioned much metaphysical jargon; but after the power of abstraction is explained as above, there remains no difficulty about them. It is mentioned above, that space as well as place enter into the perception of every visible object: a tree is perceived as existing in a certain place, and as occupying a certain space. Now, by the power of abstraction, space may be considered

abstractedly from the body that occupies it; and hence the abstract term space. In the same manner, existence may be considered abstractedly from any particular thing that exists; and place may be considered abstractedly from any particular thing that may be in it. Every series or succession of things, suggests the idea of time; and time may be considered abstractedly from any series of succession. In the same manner, we acquire the abstract term motion, rest, number, and a thousand other abstract terms; an excellent contrivance for improving speech, as without it speech would be woefully imperfect. Brute animals may have some obscure notion of these circumstances, as connected with particular objects: an ox probably perceives that he takes longer time to go round a long ridge in the plough, than a short one; and he probably perceives when he is one of four in the yoke, or only one of two. But the power of abstraction is not bestowed on brute animals; because to them it would be altogether useless, as they are incapable of speech.

40. This power of abstraction is of great utility. A carpenter considers a log of wood with regard to hardness, firmness, color, and texture: a philosopher, neglecting these properties, makes the log undergo a chemical analysis; and examines its taste, its smell, and its component principles: the geometrician confines his reasoning to the figure, the length, breadth, and thickness. In general, every artist, abstracting from all other properties, confines his observations to those which have a more immediate connection with his profession.

41. It is observed above, p. 478, that there can be no such thing as a general idea; that all our perceptions are of particular objects, and that our secondary perceptions or ideas must be equally so. Precisely, for the same reason, there can be no such thing as an abstract idea. We cannot form an idea of a part without taking in the whole; nor of motion, color, figure, independent of a body. No man will say that he can form any idea of beauty, till he think of a person endued with that quality; nor that he can form an idea of weight, till he takes under consideration a body that is weighty. And when he takes under consideration a body endued with one or other of the properties mentioned, the idea he forms is not an abstract or general idea, but the idea of a particular body with its properties. But though a part and the whole, a subject and its attributes, an effect and its cause, are so intimately connected, as that an idea cannot be formed of the one independent of the other; yet we can reason upon the one abstracting from the other.

This is done by words signifying the thing to which the reasoning is confined; and such words are denominated *abstract terms*. The meaning and use of an abstract term is well understood, though of itself, unless other particulars be taken in, it raises no image nor idea in the mind. In language it serves excellent purpose; by it different figures, different colors, can be compared, without the trouble of conceiving them as belonging to any particular subject; and they contribute with words significant to raise images or ideas in the mind.

42. The power of abstraction is bestowed on man, for the purpose solely of reasoning. It tends greatly to the facility as well as clearness of any process of reasoning, that, laying aside every other circumstance, we can confine our attention to the simple property we desire to investigate.

43. Abstract terms may be separated into three different kinds, all equally subservient to the reasoning faculty. Individuals appear to have no end; and did we not possess the faculty of distributing them into classes, the mind would be lost in an endless maze, and no progress be made in knowledge. It is by the faculty of abstraction that we distribute beings into *genera* and *species*: finding a number of individuals connected by certain qualities common to all, we give a name to these individuals considered as thus connected, which name, by gathering them together into one class, serves to express the whole of these individuals as distinct from others. Thus the word *animal* serves to denote every being that can move voluntarily; and the words *man*, *horse*, *lion*, &c. answer similar purposes. This is the first and most common sort of abstraction; and it is of the most extensive use, by enabling us to comprehend in our reasoning whole kinds and sorts, instead of individuals, without end. The next sort of abstract terms comprehends a number of individual objects, considered as connected by some occasional relation. A great number of persons collected in one place, without any other relation than merely that of contiguity, are denominated a *crowd*: in forming this term, we abstract from sex, from age, from condition, from dress, &c. A number of persons connected by the same laws and by the same government, are termed a *nation*: and a number of men under the same military command, are termed an *army*. A third sort of abstraction is, where a single property or part, which may be common to many individuals, is selected to be the subject of our contemplation; for example, whiteness, heat, beauty, length, roundness, head, arm.

44. Abstract terms are a happy invention: it is by their means chiefly, that the particulars which make the subject of our reasoning are brought into close union, and separated from all others however naturally connected. Without the aid of such terms, the mind could never be kept steady to its proper subject, but be perpetually in hazard of assuming foreign circumstances, or neglecting what are essential. We can, without the aid of language, compare real objects by intuition, when these objects are present; and when absent, we can compare them in idea. But when we advance farther, and attempt to make inferences and draw conclusions, we always employ abstract terms, even in thinking; it would be as difficult to reason without them, as to perform operations in algebra without signs; for there is scarcely any reasoning without some degree of abstraction, and we cannot easily abstract without using abstract terms. Hence it follows, that without language man would scarcely be a rational being.

45. The same thing, in different respects, has different names. With respect to certain qualities, it is termed a *substance*; with respect to other qualities, a *body*; and with respect to qualities of all sorts, a *subject*. It is termed a *passive subject* with respect to an action exerted upon it; an *object* with respect to a percipient: a *cause* with respect to the effect it produces; and an *effect* with respect to its cause.

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